THE WORLD OF FREE SOFTWARE – YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE

AMIGA · PC · ST

PUBLIC DOMAIN

AMIGA · PC · ST

ISSUE 5 ● £2.95
APRIL 1992

THE LATEST PD, SHAREWARE & LICENCEWARE REVIEWED

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with this issue of *Public Domain*! Eight self-adhesive labels to make your disk collection look the best on the block

8 DISK LABELS – *FREE!*

MAKING MUSIC FOR NOTHING

Create melodic masterpieces with our guide to the public domain and MIDI ...PAGE 18

AMIGA ● PC ● ST PACKED WITH GREAT PROGRAMS

PUBLIC DOMAIN COVER DISK 5

AMIGA

Missile Command: Protect Earth from the incoming missiles
AnimBuild: Create your own animations
Panel: MIDI tool

PC

Actaeon: Powerful DOS front-end utility
Clone Invaders: Classic shoot-'em-up
Winclock: Handy Windows clock

ST

Nova: Fast arcade blasting action
UncleLib: Catalogue your disk collection
Pinhead • Sysex Two useful utilities

Important – read the instructions first! See page 6 for details

Tri-format disk © Rob Northen Computing

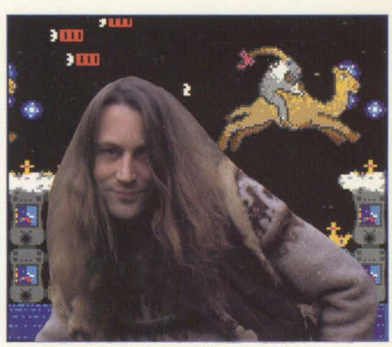
No cover disk?

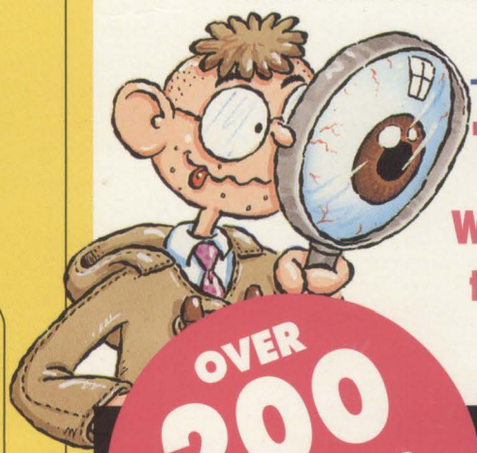
Why not ask the nice person behind the counter whether they are keeping it safe for you!

FULL DETAILS OF DISK ON PAGES 6-9

PUBLIC PROFILE

Wacky games programming genius Jeff Minter speaks out about shareware ...PAGE 36





THE SILLY SEASON!

We take a light-hearted look at the silliest programs available in the public domain ...PAGE 86

OVER 200 PROGRAMS REVIEWED

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04
9 770963 826009

Crazy Joe's

Amiga Public Domain Software

PD GAMES! PD GAMES! PD GAMES!

117 **MONOPOLY (NP)** popular old board game.
135 **CARD & BOARD GAMES (NP)** Cluedo + solitaire games.
195 **ELECTRIC TRAIN SET (NP)** for when the kids are asleep!
315 **RETURN TO EARTH (P)** "Elite" type space trading game.
496 **HOLY GRAIL * (NP)** excellent text adventure.
648 **STAR TREK (USA) (2) * (NP),** graphic adventure.
680 **LEARN & PLAY (2) (NP)** maths, words and colouring for kids.
727 **RICHTER'S STAR TREK (2) (P),** best version to date.
766 **TREASURE HUNT (NP)** pirate treasure map game for kids.
957 **PIPELINE (P)** assemble your pipe quickly to keep the oil flowing.
962 **DRIP! (P)** rust the pipes, avoid the nasties arcade game.
987 **SNAKEPIT (P)** eat the food in the maze without eating yourself.
991 **JEOPARD* (P)** 2 player game of world conquest.
1004 **GAMES DISK 9 (P)** including Tetrix Metallica!
1113 **WET BEAVER GAMES (P)** funny demo plus arcade Ping Pong.
1230 **DRAGON CAVE (P)** Sokoban type game with excellent gfx.
1520 **BALLOONACY * (P)** bomb the buildings & land your balloon.
1539 **MEGABALL (P)** the best breakout game around!
1544 **SEVEN TILES (NP)** futuristic football game like Speedball.
1577 **FRUIT MACHINE* (NP)** best fruit machine simulator bar none.
1584 **MISSILE COMMAND (NP)** stop missiles destroying your cities.
1591 **QUIZ MASTER* (NP)** excellent trivia game.
1670 **WHEEL OF FORTUNE (P)** based on the TV show.
1711 **MENTAL IMAGE GAMES DISK (NP)** 3 brill games on one disk!
1715 **FRANTIC FREDDIE (NP)** C84 favourite platforms & ladders.
1720 **CABARET ASTEROIDS (NP)** faithful version of the classic.
1746 **WORD GAMES VOLUME 1* (P)** exercise the grey matter...
1747 **WORD GAMES VOLUME 2* (P) ...** and not the joystick!
1748 **STRATEGY GAMES * (NP)** serious stuff including Sea Lance.
1749 **TRUCKIN' (2) (2D) (P)** run your own trucking company.
1832 **POM POM GUNNER* (P)** WW2 arcade action - our No 1 game.
1879 **SEA LANCE* (P)** Trident submarine simulation.
1882 **SIMPSONS GAME (P)** help Bart in this S.E.U.C.K. game.
1883 **BIONIX II* (P)** never-ending shoot'em up!
1905 **J NICKLAUS COURSES 1** data disk only!
1916 **AIR ACE II (P)** excellent WW1 shoot'em up.
1926 **NAPOLEONIC WARFARE SYSTEM* (P)** war game umpire.
2011 **TWINTRIS* (NP)** 1 or 2 player Tetris clone - very good!
2013 **ZEUS (P)** simple but addictive puzzle game.
2016 **DOWNHILL CHALLENGE** fun on the ski slopes.
2018 **WIZZY'S QUEST* (NP)** wizard fun! Excellent game!
2049 **MATHS DRILL (NP)** maths exerciser for all ages.
2050 **INSIDERS CLUB* (NP)** good stock exchange simulation.
2051 **ATIC ATAC* (NP)** explore and collect arcade game.
2052 **SHAPES (P)** addictive puzzle fun!
2057 **BATTLE PONG* (NP)** 1 or 2 player arcade classic.
2155 **GHOST SHIP (NP)** 3D arcade adventure.
2167 **LLAMATRON (NP)** Jeff Minter classic!
2177 **J NICKLAUS COURSES 2** data disk only !
2178 **SKY FLYER** excellent new SEUCK game!
2183 **REVENGE OF MUTANT CAMELS** Minter's back

DEMOS AND ANIMATIONS

747 **POPEYE MEETS THE BEACHBOYS (P)** very funny!
773 **SHARK ANIMATION* (NP)**deadly ray-tracing!
825 **BUDBRAIN 1 (2) (X) (NP)** great 2 disk demo + naughty bits!
895 **A TRIP TO MARS (NP)** demo with a difference.
906 **MADONNA CARTOON ANIM* (NP)** short digitised animation.
935 **MADONNA: HANKY PANKY (P)**excellent Madonna sample.
1033 **AT THE MOVIES** (NP)** loves of a squirrel?
1188 **FILLET THE FISH (P)** funny cartoon.
1229 **BUDBRAIN 2 (NP)** good as the first one? You judge!
1238 **EVIL DEAD DEMO (X)* (NP)** get them before they get you!
1453 **MORE AEROTOONS* (P)** 3 Schwartz classics.
1540 **AMY VS. WALKER ANIM* (NP)** Eric Schwartz at his best!
1541 **BATMAN ANIMATION* (P)** funny Schwartz animation.
1552 **MAGICIAN ANIMATION 2* (P)** simply magic!
1560 **PHENOMENA ENIGMA* (P)** suberb grx and music.
1628 **DO THE BART, MAN* (NP)** a must for all Simpsons fans!
1701 **TRON ANIMATION (2)* (P)** based on the film.
1707 **DECAY: SIMPSONS DEMO* (P)** should appeal to everyone.
1753 **LIFE OF BRIAN (2) (P)** sample from the film.
1841 **ANTI LEMMIN' DEMO (2) (NP) **** for Lemmings fans with 2 meg.
1850 **THE WALL (6) (2D) (NP) *** mammoth Pink Floyd six disker!
1856 **BETTY BOO ANIM/SLIDESHOW (P)** doing the Amiga.
1885 **ROBOCOP ANIMATION* (P)** digitised from the film.
1900 **SILENTS: ICE DEMO (NP)** superb music and graphics.
1902 **VIRTUAL WORLD*** 3D filled vector demo.
1943 **WINDSURFER ANIMATION (2) (P) *** very good.
1947 **MR POTATO HEAD (P) *** funny cartoon antics.
1948 **MR POTATO HEAD CHIPS ARE UP! (P)*** More adventures
1956 **CREATURE COMFORTS DEMO (NP)** from the TV adverts
1982 **3D PINBALL ANIMATION* (P)** beautiful ray-tracing.

AMIGA A500 PLUS

Certain software will not work on the new Amiga. We are compiling a list of compatible titles, but this will take some time to complete. In the meantime, prob-

USEFUL SOFTWARE

81 **UEDIT WORD PROCESSOR**
119 **AMIGA MCAD (P)**
410 **DPAINT CARTOON BRUSHES**
442 **DPAINT FONTS DISKS (4) (P)**
458 **HAM RADIO UTILITIES (5) (NP)**
571 **JAZZBENCH (NP)**
580 **DOPE INTRO MAKER (NP)**
591 **BUSINESS CARD MAKER (P)**
632 **MSH (MESSYDOS) (NP)**
642 **C MANUAL**
661 **PROGRAMMING DISK 1 (NP)**
682 **SOUND APPLICATIONS (2) (NP)**
684 **VIDEO APPLICATIONS (2) (P)**
901 **THE COMMS DISK (NP)**
1022 **AMOS UPDATE 1.3 (P)**
1095 **DATABASE WORKSHOP (2) (P)**
1097 **DPAINT CLIP ART (2) (P)**
1099 **VIDEO GRAPHICS (4)**
1117 **GENEALOGY* (P)**
1228 **ST EMULATOR (GERMAN) (NP)**
1273 **C-LIGHT (P)**
1450 **NEW SUPERKILLERS (P)**
1451 **ELECTROCAD V1.4 DEMO (P)**
1452 **AMIBASE (P)**
1536 **NORTH C (PACKED) (NP)**
1537 **NORTH C (UNPACKED) (2) (NP)**
1545 **SPECTRAPAINT V3.0**
1550 **FLEXIBASE V2.0 (P)**
1569 **LANGUAGE TUTOR (NP)**
1606 **DATABASE MASTER 2.0 (NP)**
1629 **SPECTRUM EMULATOR (NP)**
1663 **DYNAMITE BRUSH FONTS (P)**
1858 **202 UTILITIES (NP)**
1878 **TEXTPLUS WORD PROC. (P)**
1880 **DCOPY & UTILITIES (NP)**
1884 **EQUINOX INTRO WRITER* (NP)**
1886 **MED V3.10 (NP)**
1893 **DICE V2.06A (NP)**
1896 **DESK BENCH (3) (NP)**
1906 **PAGESETTER CLIP ART (8) (P)**
1914 **SLIDESHOW CONSTRUCTOR (NP)**
1951 **KING JAMES BIBLE (3) (P)**
1954 **CELTICS DEMO MAKER (NP)**
1987 **QUICKBENCH* (NP)**
1990 **NIGHTFLYERS UTILITIES IV (NP)**
2004 **TURBO IMPLODER V4.0 (P)**
2012 **DRAW MAP V2.3D (P)**
2058 **VECTOR BALL EDITOR* (NP)**
2168 **MESSYSID**
2174 **ANTI-VIRUS V3.14 (P)**
2176 **KIDS PAINT (P)**
2180 **TEXT ENGINE**
2181 **AMIGA FOX DTP**
2182 **WINDOWS BENCH**

MUSIC DISKS

61 **J M JARRE - DEFINITIVE (P)**
407 **CD PLAYER DEMO* (P)**
713 **FLASH! - QUEEN (2) (P)**
724 **TECHNOTRONIC REMIX (P)**
746 **CRUSADERS BACTERIA (P)**
941 **SOUNDTRACKER JUKEBOX (NP)**
976 **SCOOPEX BEAST SONIX (NP)**
1026 **DIGITAL CONCERT VI (NP)**
1292 **CRUSADERS: GENESIS (NP)**
1685 **DEPECHE MODE MUSIC DISK**
1694 **ART OF MED MUSIC (P)**
1695 **SEAL CRAZY REMIX* (NP)**
1713 **SPACED OUT VOLUME 1**
1714 **SPACED OUT VOLUME 2 (P)**
1716 **I THINK WE'RE ALONE (P)**
1717 **EVERYBODY DANCE NOW (P)**
1718 **DOING THE DO (P)**
1755 **AMAZING TUNES 2 (3)* (NP)**
1993 **CATS SING KYLIE! (NP)**
2006 **SAMPLE SENSATIONS* (NP)**
2008 **MOVE ANY MOUNTAIN* (P)**
2059 **VIVALDI FOUR SEASONS (2)* (P)**
2159 **CHARLY (P)**
2160 **WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR ME? (P)**

SLIDESHOWS

282 **FORGOTTEN REALMS (P)**
617 **NEIGHBOURS SLIDESHOW**
725 **DIGGY PIGGIES (2) (NP)**
742 **MADONNA SLIDESHOW (P)**
814 **VIZ SLIDESHOW (P)**
891 **CREEPSHOW (P)**
899 **MADONNA SLIDESHOW 2 (2)* (NP)**
968 **GOREZONE SLIDESHOW (X) (P)**
1051 **TOTAL RECALL SLIDESHOW (NP)**
1085 **COMIC SLIDESHOW (X) (NP)**
1103 **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED GIRLS (P)**
1263 **RICHTER S/SHOW (2) (2D) (P)**
1277 **DIVINE VISIONS (2)* (NP)**
1279 **FORGOTTEN REALMS '90 (P)**
1708 **INVISIBLE WORLD (P)**
1719 **YABBA DABBA CARTOONS (P)**
1876 **REFLECTIONS 6 (NP)**
1835 **NIGHT BREED SLIDESHOW (P)**
1901 **LEEDS UNITED SLIDESHOW (P)**
1919 **DEBBIE HARRY (2) (2D)* (NP)**
1781 **REFLECTIONS (NP)**
1984 **TERMINATOR SLIDESHOW (NP)**
1986 **ALIENS SLIDESHOW (NP)**
1991 **AQUARIUS IMAGES (P)**

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(2D) = 2 drives, (X) = Adults only
(P) = A500 Plus Compatible
(NP) = Not A500 Plus Compatible

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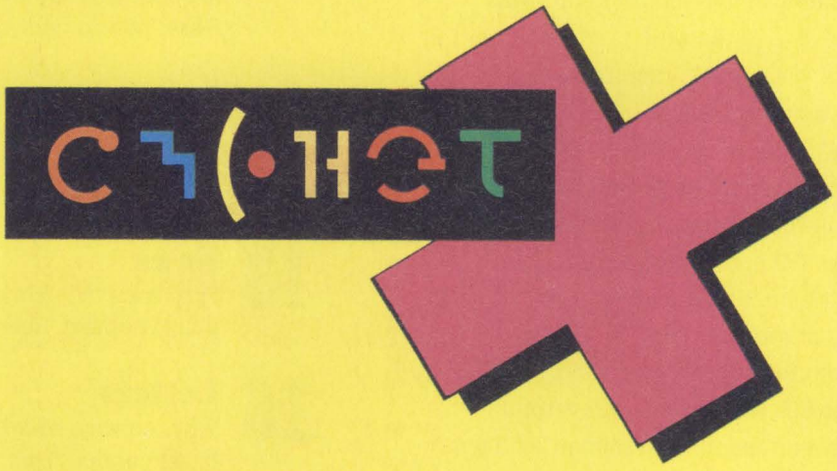

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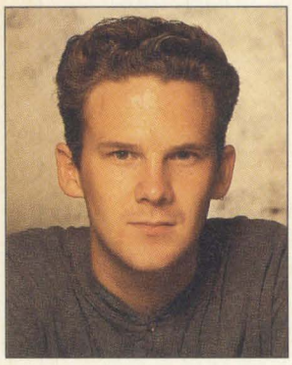
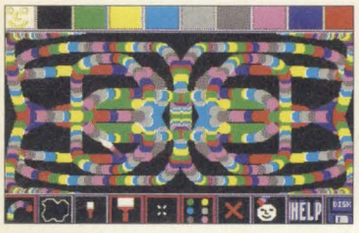


A warm welcome to issue five of *Public Domain*. We've managed to pack plenty in this month in the way of reviews and features.

Our MIDI article (see page 18) gives you all the information you need to start up a real one-man band (with a little help from your computer). The amazing thing is that the PD and shareware software available is every bit as good as the stuff for which you can pay hundreds of pounds. See you at the Grammys!

Our new Public Eye series starts this month (page 36), where we talk to the top people in PD. We kick off with veteran programmer and self-confessed sheep fanatic Jeff Minter. Find out what he thinks about life, the universe and shareware!

The PC is infamous for its unfriendly DOS interface. Microsoft's Windows graphical replacement makes your machine easier to get along with. PD and shareware has exploited the environment with bags of programs and utilities available. See what's around in our Windows special on page 52.



Paint packages for youngsters get reviewed in Home and Education... page 88

Need to keep track of clients? Then check out Business and Applications... page 56

THE PD TEAM – ISSUE 5

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CONT

6 Cover disk pages
You've ripped the disk off the cover, stuck it in your disk drive, what next? Check out these pages
Plus: how to find your way around *Public Domain*

11 Subscribe now!
Don't miss this incredible offer! Get *Public Domain* delivered to your door every month at a price you just won't be able to believe

13 News
The times they are a-changing, especially in the public domain. Read about the latest developments

16 Letters
Why, oh why, oh why? Angry from Tunbridge Wells or astounded from Aberdeen, here's where *you* get your chance to speak out

18 MIDI Music
You don't need to be a multi-instrumental genius to make beautiful music. Thanks to MIDI and your computer you'll be on *Top of the Pops* with a silly haircut and baggy trousers in no time. The best in MIDI PD and shareware reviewed

24 Reviews: Programming & Utilities
If you're the sort of person that likes to dabble with DOS or meddle with machine code then check out this section for all those handy little utilities that make programming less of a hassle

36 Public Eye: Jeff Minter
In the first of a regular series of interviews with big names from the world of PD and shareware we bring you the thoughts and meditations of Llamasoft's idiosyncratic boss Jeff Minter

38 Reviews: Games
What's worth waggling your joystick for this month? The latest public domain and shareware games come under the closest scrutiny

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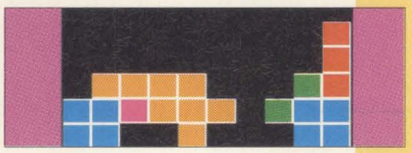
PD and Shareware for Windows 51
What's available in the public domain for the mouse-controlled graphical user interface that has given the PC a much-needed friendlier public profile? Find out in our Windows round-up



Reviews: Business & Applications 56
Business software doesn't have to mean missing out on that flash photocopier. From word processors to spreadsheets, the public domain has them all at a price which leaves you enough dosh for other luxuries

Demo Creators 67
Achieve in seconds what it takes demo writers weeks to do (and without having to use – ugh – machine code). We tell you about the best demo creators around in the public domain

Problem Solved! 70
Got a PD problem? Then we've got the answer

Reviews: Demos 72
Want to be impressed? Then slam a demo in your disk drive and see what your machine can really achieve. We recommend the best of the latest bunch

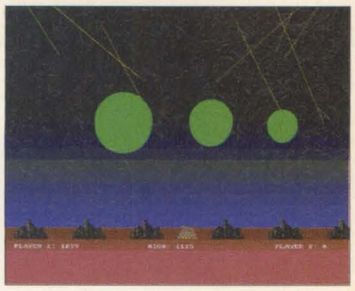
Calling all libraries 82
Do you run an Amiga, ST or PC PD or shareware library? Then we want to know all about you

Pointless PD 86
The public domain is full of all sorts of unlikely programs. We look at the stuff that's so useless, you've simply got to have it in your collection!

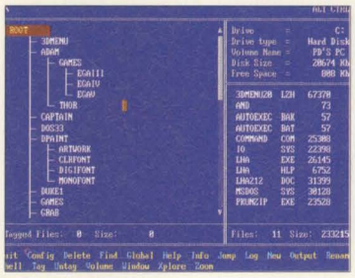
Reviews: Home & Education 88
The public domain can be a real education as this section proves. We do all the homework and bring you the best in early learning and hobbies software

Mail order 97
Psst! Wanna know where you can get hold of a top-quality modem at bargain price?

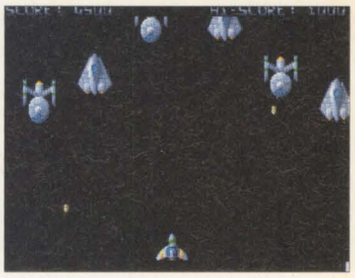
Index 98
Every program reviewed in this issue listed so that you can locate them in an instant



Blast the incoming laser missiles to protect your cities in *Missile Command* for the Amiga



Actaeon displays the directories on your PC disks clearly, plus it does much more...



Your ST has never seen so much action before – *Nuke* is an amazing shoot-'em-up

Got an Amiga? ..... Turn to page 7....

- **Missile Command** Save your cities from certain destruction in this brilliant conversion of the classic arcade game
- **AnimBuild** Potential animators rejoice – now you can create your own animations easily using standard IFF pictures
- **Panel** And for those MIDI musicians out there, now you can adjust the settings of your MIDI equipment with ease

Got a PC? ..... Turn to page 8.....

- **Actaeon** Achieve your disk and file operations without the hassle of using MS-DOS. *Actaeon* is more than just another one of those DOS front-ends – it also lets you edit text files and operates much faster
- **Clone Invaders** Those aliens are back in this brilliant incarnation of the classic *Space Invaders*, seen here in full glory on your PC
- **Winclock** Use the power of your PC in an unheard of way: as an alarm clock! A handy Windows tool that is useful to have around

Got an ST? ..... Turn to page 9.....

- **Nova** Blast aliens into space dust in this graphically impressive and addictive shoot-'em-up that stretches your ST to the limits
- **UncleLib** Here's your chance to get organised – use *UncleLib* to catalogue your disk collection so you can find your programs quickly
- **Pinhead** Use this tiny utility to speed up your ST's disk operations so it finds and loads your programs much faster
- **Sysex** Send signals to specific makes of MIDI equipment

HOW TO USE THIS MAGAZINE

New readers start here

The public domain is a weird and wacky place where you can get all sorts of software at prices you wouldn't believe – some of it even free! Cheap doesn't mean nasty, though. Some of it is every bit as good, if not better, than full-priced programs, but, we have to admit, there are some duds too. We aim to point you in the direction of the decent stuff and review all the software as if it were a commercial product; we're not going to be soft just because it's cheap. We want you to know exactly what you're going to get.

If you're new to PD and don't know what all the different varieties are and how to get hold of the disks, this is the place to start...

What does it all mean?

● **Public Domain:** A generic term which at its simplest and purest level refers to non-copyrighted software which can be distributed freely. You can copy a public domain disk with no fear of breaking copyright laws. If you order disks from a library, then in theory you should only be charged for the distribution and copying costs. Freeware is virtually the same as PD except that the author retains the copyright to his program and you are not allowed to alter the program in any way.

● **Shareware:** Operates on a try-before-you-buy basis. Distributed in the same way as PD software (your mates can copy it), the difference being that if you like the program and intend to use it regularly you are required to send off a registration fee. This is usually fairly minimal, and represents good value as some shareware programs rival commercial counterparts.

● **Licenceware:** Not really PD at all, though it is usually distributed by the same libraries. Certain libraries are licensed to sell the software, and for every copy of the program sold the author receives a royalty. Licenceware cannot be copied freely among friends.

● **Bannerware:** This means a cut-down version of a program released into the public domain – usually with some feature disabled – as a teaser, in the hope that it'll impress you so much you'll want to buy the full-priced implemtation. This differs from shareware in that you can use bannerware as much as you like without being obliged to send away a registration fee.

● **Otherware:** You may come across such terms as giftware, charityware and even chocolateware. These are pretty rare, and require you to send some sort of gift to the author or other organisation they have nominated.

Colour coding...

Being a multi-format magazine there will be some sections that will be relevant to only one type of computer. So, to make life easier we've colour-coded the magazine so that you can tell instantly if a review or article will appeal to you...

Amiga **All AMIGA-related articles are indicated in RED**

PC **All PC-related articles are indicated in GREEN**

ST **All ST-related articles are indicated in BLUE**

Where to get PD software

There are hundreds of public domain and shareware libraries around the country who will send a disk packed full of software to you for a small copying charge. Most of the programs we review are available from more than one of them. We give the name of the library that sent us the software for review, but if you see a program that takes your fancy it will probably be available from other libraries as well, so there's no harm in shopping around. And don't forget to check out the adverts in this issue as well. If you run a PD library and you want a mention, then the best way to make sure you get one is to send us in some software!

COVER DISK

Whether it's indispensable utilities or flabbergasting games you're after the *Public Domain* cover disk has the lot every month, no matter what your machine, be it Amiga, PC or ST.

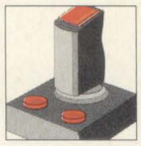
This is all possible because of a custom disk format specially developed for *Public Domain*. Wham in that disk and go!

What those programs are at a glance

Programming & Utilities

If you're seriously into serious computing these are the programs you need to get the most out of your machine. You'll wonder how on earth you ever lived without them

Games



Of course we do! It's not all work, work, work! You've got to relax sometimes, and what better way than with a bit of joystick-waggling. Everything from blast-'em-ups to puzzlers

Taking care of your cover disk

Follow these steps before you do anything with your cover disk:

1. Write-protect the cover disk – move the plastic slider so that you can see through the hole
2. Make a back-up copy of the cover disk – read the disk page for your machine to find out how
3. Follow *all* the instructions for your machine

Tri-format tips

The *Public Domain* cover disk is a unique tri-format disk, containing software for the Amiga, PC and ST. We try and cram as many programs on the disk as possible but the disk's custom format means that it can't be treated just like any other disk. That is why it's important that you follow the instructions printed on the cover disk pages. If any data is written to the cover disk itself, the disk will be useless.

But some of you may experience problems with the disk that have got nothing to do with the way you have used it. If so, follow these instructions:

● If your disk won't load

If you can't load any of the programs on the cover disk, or an error occurs when you try to access the disk, chances are you have an incorrectly duplicated disk. Over 70,000 *Public Domain* cover disks are duplicated each month, and of these a few might not have been duplicated properly.

If this sounds like the problem you've been experiencing, send the disk, together with an SAE to:

***Public Domain* April Disk, Disk Copy Labs, Unit A, Westmarch, London Road, Daventry, Northants NN4 4SA**

A replacement disk will be winging its way to you as soon as possible. It's very important that if you send a disk to Disk Copy Labs you include information about what type of computer you have.

● Program problems

If you have a problem with the programs on the disk, such as you can get them running but they crash or behave strangely, then we'd like to hear about it. Send us a description of your problem, giving details of the system you have and its peripherals, and what exactly the problem is. Please don't send the disk itself to us, we just haven't got the supplies here to replace it, but we will endeavour to help you out. Send the details to:

Cover Disk Problems, *Public Domain*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Shareware Contributions

Please note that many of the programs on the public domain cover disk are shareware. You are therefore morally bound to pay the programmer a minimal shareware contribution if you decide to continue using their program. Full details on how to register your copy of the shareware utilities are included in the documentation files for each program. Do the decent thing.

AMIGA

Missile Command

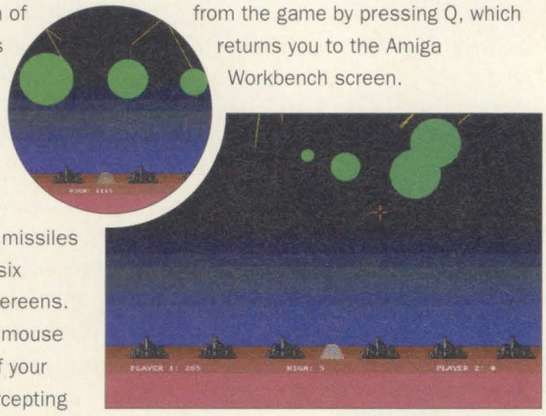
(Public Domain) Games

The legendary *Missile Command* has been around for a number of years now and is widely recognised as being one of the best games of all-time. Its fast-paced and explosive action is an enduring challenge for all but the most adept game players, testing hand-to-eye co-ordination to the limits.

This Amiga version of *Missile Command* lives up to the high standards of the original coin-op. Controlled by the mouse, you have to intercept the incoming missiles before they blast your six beloved cities to smithereens.

A press of the left mouse button launches one of your missiles skyward, intercepting the deadly lasers beams before they hit the cities below. You only have a limited supply of missiles to use on each level, and you can keep track of just how many you have left by looking at your base at the centre bottom of the screen – the missiles are represented as dots on the base, and each dot represents several of your missiles.

Missile Command can be played by either one or two people; in two-player mode you each take turns at blasting the enemy. To select a one- or two-player game, press 1 or 2 at the start of the game. You can exit from the game by pressing Q, which returns you to the Amiga Workbench screen.



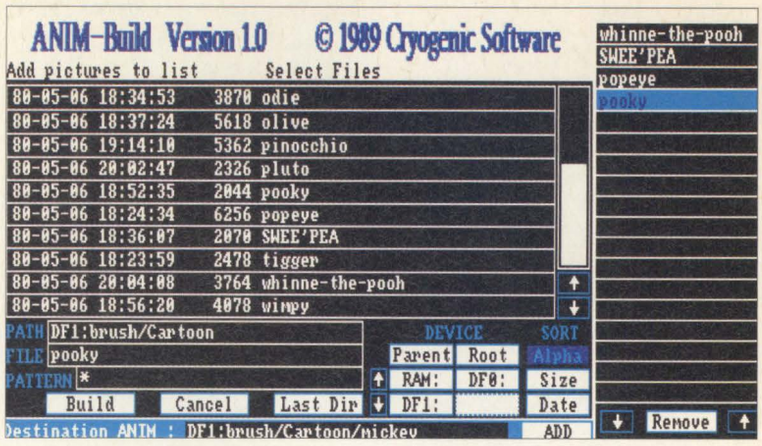
Those green round things are your nuclear explosions, positioned to destroy the city-ward laser beams

Before you do anything else – read this!

Before you attempt to use any of the Amiga programs on the *Public Domain* cover disk, we strongly advise that you make a back-up copy. If you try to run the programs from the tri-format disk there is always the chance that it will be irreparably damaged, and you will have lost the programs permanently. Here's what to do:

1. **Format a blank disk on to which you can transfer the programs. To do this, re-boot your machine (by pressing the Ctrl and the two Amiga keys situated at each side of the space bar) and put your copy of the Workbench disk in the disk drive. When the Workbench screen comes up, take out your Workbench disk and insert the disk you want to format. Highlight that disk's icon by clicking on it, then hold down the right mouse button and move the cursor to the top of the screen. Select Initialise from the Disk menu and follow its instructions. Pretty soon have you'll have a blank disk.**
2. **Re-boot again and insert your cover disk in your disk drive.**
3. **The disk's icon, labelled Tri-Format Disk, will appear. Click on it with the mouse to display the programs on the disk. You should only run one program from the original cover disk: the program called *Backup*. Click on the *Backup* icon to run the program, and follow its instructions.**
4. **When you have made your back-up copy, put your original cover disk in a safe place. All of the programs can be run from the copied disk by double-clicking on the appropriate program's icon to open up its window, then on the file itself.**

If you experience problems *after* having followed these steps, then turn to page six.



***AnimBuild* uses the familiar Amiga front-end to load and arrange IFF files to create animations**

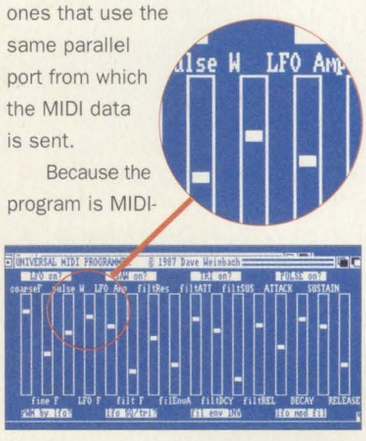
Panel

(Public Domain) Utilities

Panel, or PANL as the filename is called, is a MIDI-related tool which enables you to adjust the settings of your MIDI channels so that everything sounds exactly as you want it. The program enables the user to send MIDI parameter information from the Amiga to any MIDI device that will accept the information.

The program can be run from either Workbench or the CLI (Command Line Interface) and can multi-task with other programs, even ones that use the same parallel port from which the MIDI data is sent.

Because the program is MIDI-related, it can only be used properly by those of you who have a MIDI interface and MIDI-compatible music equipment. If you do, then it's an essential tool.



Thanks to easy-to-use equaliser bars, *Panel* lets you adjust the MIDI channels on-screen

If you want to find out more about MIDI, how it works and the way it can make creating music easy, turn to page 18, now!

AnimBuild

(Public Domain) Utilities

We've received a number of letters from people who want to create their own animations on the Amiga. *AnimBuild* is one of the easiest ways of doing this that we have seen, using basic IFF pictures and arranging them in order to produce the illusion of moving objects.

When it first loads *AnimBuild* immediately prompts you to load in an IFF picture such as one created in a paint package like *Deluxe Paint*.

All the pictures you use in *AnimBuild* must be of the same resolution and display modes, and at least three filenames must be given before an animation is attempted by the program.

The animations created by the program are in the OpCode 5 file-type, which is accepted as the standard format for animations. Full details on how to use the program can be found in the program's accompanying document file, *AnimBuild.doc* which can be read by clicking on the file's icon.

SysInfo Info

***SysInfo*, the program included on issue three's cover disk, will not always work properly on the Amiga 500 Plus. It seems the program works OK if run as soon as the computer is switched on, but, owing to changes in the computer's memory, it will not work fully at other times. This has been fixed in the latest version, available from most PD libraries**

PC

Actaeon

(Shareware) Utilities

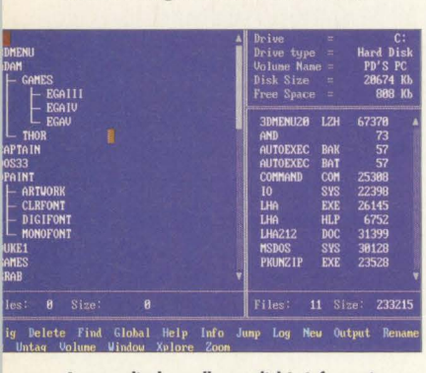
Actaeon is an essential utility for your PC that makes most disk and file operations as easy as hating Jeremy Beadle, by-passing the irritating intricacies of the unwieldy MS-DOS.

All the essential features for this type of program are there: displaying tree diagrams of the files and directories on a disk; copying, moving and deleting individual and multiple files. But *Actaeon* also has a number of not-so-common features, including its ability to support a mouse, even to the extent of providing scroll bars so you know how far down a directory you are, for example.

There is also a built-in text editor so that you can not only view text files but edit them as well – useful if you want to, say, change your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. You can also browse through a variety of file types: text files in ASCII and hexadecimal formats; database files created with *dBase*; graphic image standards like GIF; as well as ZIP and LZH archived files.

You can also search through the files on a disk to find a particular file or a string of information, essential if your hard disk gets as clogged up as the ones in our office.

If you get stumped somewhere in the program, and there's no reason why you should, you can call up the built-in help screens which display the appropriate information for the section of the program you're in.



***Actaeon* displays all your disk's information on-screen in the form of a tree diagram**

Shareware registration for Actaeon *costs £17.95 and should be sent to: Jon Clempner, 20, Norleigh Road, Northenden, Manchester M22 4AZ.*

Clone Invaders

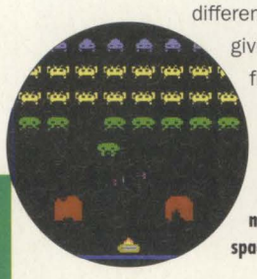
(Shareware) Games

Those infamous, relentless invaders from space have returned in this PC incarnation of the classic arcade game, *Clone Invaders*.

By now just about everyone should know how to play this ground-breaking game, but in case you've been stuck in a time capsule for the last 15 years here's a run-down of what to do.

Basically, shoot the marauding aliens as they progressively make their way down the screen. You've got four bases to shelter yourself from the alien armaments, but these are gradually eroded by the missiles. At regular intervals during the game a UFO-like craft makes its way across the top of the screen and this can be destroyed for bonus points.

Your craft can be controlled by mouse, joystick or the keyboard and the game can be played at three different speeds, giving you the flexibility to play it according to your system set-up and your game-playing abilities. When it first loads, press S to select the graphics mode in which you want the game displayed, and the speed at which you want to play it. Pressing M enables you to adjust the sensitivity of the mouse (If you've got one).



***Clone Invaders* pits you against meanies from outer space. A classic game**

The keyboard controls are the arrow keys on the numeric keypad to move and the space bar to fire. The mouse and joystick controls are pretty much self-explanatory.

Despite its age, *Clone Invaders* is an addictive game. It's easy to see why and how it revolutionised computer games. Life would never be the same without those little creatures from outer space...

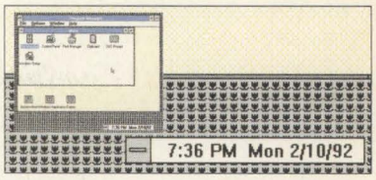
Registration for Clone Invaders *costs $20 (around £12) and should be sent to: Gary Quiring, 37 Essie Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747, USA.*

Winclock (Shareware)

(Windows only) Utilities

Winclock, as its name suggests, is a clock program for the PC which runs under Microsoft Windows.

It's basically a digital clock. A small display appears in the bottom right of the screen showing the current time and date according to your system clock. Click in the top left box in the program window to access *Winclock*'s various options which include being able to re-set the time and date, setting an alarm to go off at a particular time, an hourly beeper and a countdown timer.



Size isn't everything – it might be small but *Winclock* is incredibly handy to have around

With the flexibility of Windows you can position the clock anywhere on the screen, so you can have it wherever you find it convenient or so you can see it along with the other Windows programs in use.

Check out our Windows feature (p51).

To register Winclock, *send $7.50 (£4) to: David A. Feinleib, 1430 Mass Ave Suite 306-42, Cambridge, MA 02138.*

Before you do anything else – read this!

PC owners who have used previous *Public Domain* cover disks will notice a change this month. We've decided to archive the PC files to try and fit more programs on the disk. As a result, you'll have to do a couple of extra things before you can get everything on the disk up and running, but if you follow these simple instructions you should be away in no time. But you must follow them exactly, because if you try to run the programs from the tri-format disk there is always the chance that it will be irreparably damaged, and you will have lost the programs permanently. Here's what to do:

1. **Format a blank disk using the MS-DOS Format command**
2. **Next, write protect your disk – move the tab on the back so that you can see through the hole**
3. **Use the XCOPY command to make the back-up. With your system disk in drive A: enter the following command:**
   `XCOPY A:\PC\*.* B: /S`
   When prompted, insert your cover disk in drive A: and your freshly-formatted disk in drive B:. If you're using a single drive, XCOPY will treat your single drive as both A: and B: so just follow the on-screen prompts and you won't go far wrong
4. **If you want to back-up this disk to your hard drive, enter:**
   `XCOPY A:\PC\*.* C: /S`
5. **With the back-up of the cover disk in drive A: if you get a directory of it you should see just two files: INSTALL.BAT and the archived file. To dearchive the file, enter INSTALL and then the letter of the device you want to copy the files to. So, for example, to dearchive the files to drive C: enter:**
   `INSTALL C:`
   The files will then be automatically dearchived on to that device and then you're ready to go.

If you experience any problems *after* having followed these steps, then turn to page six.

Running the programs

Once you've dearchived the disk (see opposite) all of the PC programs on the cover disk are contained in the PC.5 directory, with each program in its own sub-directory.

To access these programs, change to the PC.5 directory by typing:

`CD PC.5`

To list the various sub-directories type:

`DIR`

If you want to access the programs held in these directories type:

`CD <name of subdirectory>`

Once in a sub-directory, you then have to type in the name of the program to run it. These names vary depending on the program you wish to run. Here's a list of the commands you should type in to run the appropriate program:

- *Actaeon* ACTAEON.EXE
- *Clone Invaders* CLONINV.EXE
- *Winclock* Has to be run from Windows

ST

Pinhead

(Shareware) Utilities

While the ST isn't exactly sluggish when it comes to accessing files, it isn't what you would call spritely either. *Pinhead* has been designed to speed up the process, to make booting up the ST a more rapid process. And it doesn't stop there – an additional bonus is that a whole load of other disk functions also become a lot speedier, too.

The program should be placed in the AUTO folder of whichever disk it is present on, so that as soon as the disk is put in the drive *Pinhead* automatically loads and runs itself, speeding up your disk operations right away. Every program that runs after *Pinhead* has been installed loads in faster, until you switch off your ST, that is.

According to the author, most GEM-based software will run with *Pinhead* in memory. On the off-chance that they won't the program can be easily disabled.

Shareware registration for Pinhead *costs US$15 (£8) and should be sent to: Charles F Johnson, PO Box 1250, Pacific Palisade, CA 90272, USA.*

Running the programs

All of the files for the ST are contained in the ST folder on the cover disk. Each of the ST programs are contained within their own folder.

To access these programs, click on the ST folder on the GEM desktop. A window will open. Click on the folder of the program you want to load. To load each of the programs, click on:

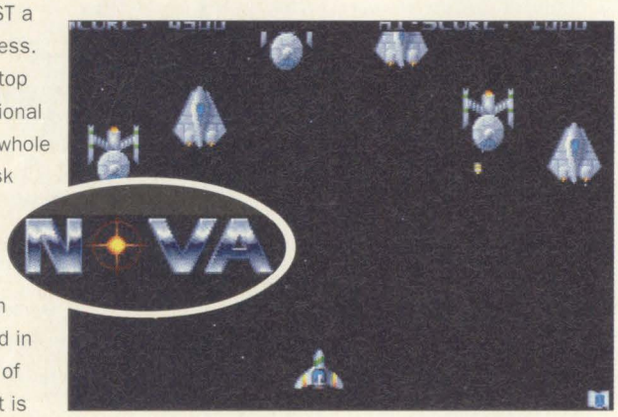
- *Pinhead* PINHEAD.PRG
- *Nova* NOVA.TOS
- *UncleLib* UNCLE_02.PRG
- *Sysex* SYSEX0.PRG

Nova

(Public Domain) Games

Those of you with an itchy trigger finger, prepare to have it well and truly scratched. After a few rounds of this fast-paced shoot-'em-up which pits you against dozens of waves of different aliens you'll never be bothered with minor skin irritations ever again.

The idea behind *Nova* is simple: kill the aliens before they kill you (setting back the cause of inter-racial harmony a few thousand millennia). At your disposal you have a continuous supply of bullets, one of which will be enough to destroy the majority of the enemies you'll encounter in the game. Some aliens, however, need to be shot several times before they are forced to eat space dust.



With some of the most impressive graphics seen in a PD game, *Nova* stretches your reactions (and your joystick) to the limits

When it's in full flight, *Nova* features some of the most impressive graphics yet seen in a PD game – some of the enemy crafts are virtually mini-masterpieces!

The game can be controlled by either keyboard or joystick, and there is also an option for having rapid fire – simply hold down the joystick button or Return key and you'll prevent your fire button wearing out.

The keyboard controls are:

- A – Left
- S – Right
- Return – fire
- F10 – Quit.

Not at all predictable, *Nova* features several different attack waves and aliens which fly around in a variety of patterns. They've certainly learnt a thing or two since those *Space Invaders* days.

Uncle Lib

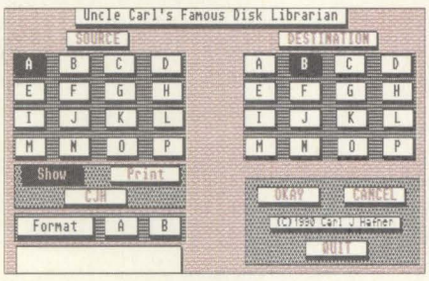
(Shareware) Utilities

When you're collecting PD and shareware software the disks start to pile up pretty quickly. Most of your disks will contain a number of files (especially in this time of disk shortages when every byte of space counts), so when it comes to tracking down individual programs it can take a while to find the right disk, especially if you don't label them very clearly (and who does?)

UncleLib, or *Uncle Carl's Famous Disk Librarian*, lets you keep track of all those files by cataloguing them. The program reads all the directories from floppy and hard disk drives, and then lets you save the information to disk as a standard ASCII file.

There are five categories of data that can be stored in *UncleLib*'s catalogue: the name of the file; the name of folder; the size of the file; the time the file or folder was created; and the attribute of the file (whether it is write protected, a 'hidden' file or a system file, for example).

This information can also be viewed on-screen within the program, or it can be directly printed out. Another handy option is if you haven't got a formatted disk ready to save the data on to, you can format one from *UncleLib*.



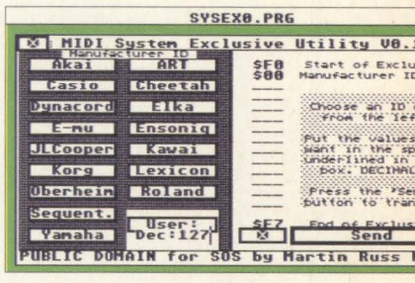
Select the source and destination and off you go! *UncleLib* will create a catalogue of all your disks

To register for UncleLib, *send US$15 (£8) to: Uncle Carl J Hafner, RD 2, Box 184C, Hawley, PA 18428, USA.*

Sysex

(Public Domain) Utilities

One for the MIDI musicians out there, *Sysex* lets you send MIDI commands to your MIDI equipment but not just any equipment – it is capable of sending control commands specifically for different makes of MIDI gear.



***Sysex* lets you access the MIDI channels of a wide range of manufacturer's equipment**

Most MIDI manufacturers have their own codes that are used by their equipment and this tool will enable you to set-up this kit according to the make of it. *Sysex* supports all the major MIDI manufacturers, such as Korg, Casio and Yamaha.

To find out all about the wonders of MIDI musical instruments, look at the feature on page 18 which explains all the ins, outs and, indeed, thrus of this modern way of creating electronic music.

Before you do anything else – read this!

Before you attempt to use any of the ST programs on the *Public Domain* cover disk, we strongly advise that you make a back-up copy. If you try to run the programs from the tri-format disk there is always the chance that it will be irreparably damaged, and you will have lost the programs permanently. Here's what to do:

1. **Format a blank disk.**
2. **Write protect the original *Public Domain* cover disk and insert it into the internal drive. Double click on the drive A icon and select the ST drawer icon and drag it across onto the drive B icon. If you have twin drives, then insert your blank disk into drive B and proceed.**
3. **If you only have a single drive, follow the on-screen dialogue boxes until the disk is successfully backed up. This will take a fair bit of disk swapping, but be patient.**

If you experience any problems *after* having followed these steps, then turn to page six.

STRICTLY pd

THE FINEST PUBLIC DOMAIN SOFTWARE

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Strictly the best public domain disks at Strictly public domain prices

utilities

U072 A-GENE (1MG) – Plot your family tree.
U063 AMIGAZER – Positioning and vital statistics of stars.
U071 BIORHTHMS (1MG) – Your physical, mental and emotional cycles.
U054 BUSINESS CARD MAKER – Very useful utility.
U069 CARTOON BRUSHES – Brilliant cartoon drawings for use with D-Paint.
U073 C-LIGHT – Formerly a commercial ray tracing package.
U289 COMMUNICATIONS DISK – Utilities for use with modems – Essential.
U056 D.T.P. CLIPART (2 DISKS) – Packed with excellent pics.
U042 GERMAN – Learn Basic German, very well produced.
U089 FLEXIBASE – Brilliantly versatile database.
U241 FONTS/LOGOS – Masses for use with D-Paint.
U006 BUSINESS PACK (3 DISKS) – W/Processor, spreadsheet + database.
U096 LABEL PRINTER – Get your disks looking nicer.
U058 NORTH C – Find out about C-Compiling.
U295 QUICKBENCH – Forget Workbench and use this.
U237 PROFESSIONAL DEMO MAKER – Create your own demo masterpieces.
U209 REDSECTOR DEMO MAKER – Very powerful utility – recommended.
U025 SID V1.6 – The essential utility.
U070 SLIDESHOW MAKER – Ihows how to present pics in different ways.
U288 SPANISH TUTOR – Learn Spanish from basics.
U084 SPEECH TOY – Get your Amiga talking.
U094 UEDIT – Best text editor in P.D.
U284 V12 CLIPART – All your favourie characters.
U297 SOUND WORKSHOP – Essential utils for use with soundtracker type progs.
U299 SCENE GENERATOR – Create landscapes with fractals.
U281 MED V3.1 – Get creative with your samples.
U312 MANDLEBROTS – The best Mandlebrot disk around.
U313 AQUARIUM – Find out whats on Fish Disks (1-470).
U286 HOUSE SAMPLES (2 DISKS) – All you ravers get these now – sound!

latest utilities

U315 LEED V1.0 – Excellent util for use with D-Paint 3.
U314 THE FINAL FRONTIER (2 DISKS) – Magazine giving info + lots more on Star Trek – very good.
U315 ULTIMATE ICONS – Includes Icon Lab, Icon Master & Icon Meister – splendid disk.
U316 ENHANCED NOISE TRACKER COLLECTION – Make some noise with this essential sound disk.
U317 HOME BUSINESS PACK 2 – Keep your bank account in order.
U318 SYSTEM TEST DISK – Find out whats wrong with your Amiga.
U319 SOUND TRACKER SAMPLES (4 DISKS) – Crammed with over 300 samples.
U320 SUPER C DISK – Details of around 150 C commands & progs.
U321 SUPA FONTS – Masses of them for use with D-Paint etc.
U322 SUPER KILLERS – Totally eradicate those viruses – mega disk!
U323 RSI VECTORBALL EDITOR – Brilliantly easy and effective editor for use with Red Sector Demo Maker.
U324 HARD DISK UTILS – Useful utils with full documents for hard drives.
U325 REDSECTOR EXTRAS #1 – Powerful utils for use with R.S.D.M. – get it now!
U326 AMIGAFOX – The first DTP package to emerge in P.D.
U327 MESSYSID II – Updated file converter program – very effective.
U328 SOZOBAN 'C' COMPILER – The most comprehensive disk on C yet.
U329 TURBO IMPLODER V4.0 – Very powerful cruncher.
U330 FILM SAMPLES – Very imaginative set of 56 samples.
U331 LAND BUILD 3.2 – Generate landscapes and view from any angle. Totally amazing!
U332 WINDOWBENCH – Similar to Microsoft windows but functions the same as Workbench.
U333 REDSECTOR FONT EDITOR – Helps to get your demos looking professional.
U334 REDSECTOR VECTOR EDITOR – Makes Vector objects so easy to create.
U335 REDSECTOR DEMO MAKER – Make the most of the Demo Maker. Help + utilities.
U336 PRINTER DRIVER PACK – Caters for around 50 printers.
U337 QUICKBENCH PLUS – Speed things up on your A500 plus.
U338 PDOM CLIPIT (5 DISKS) – Masses of pics for use in D.T.P.
U339 DYNAMITE FONTS (2 DISKS) – Staggeringly good looking fonts – excellent.

Branded Disks

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animations

D089 Star Trek Animation
D314 Girls on Film (X)
D448 Mr Potato Head – The chips are up
D121 Star Trek Animation
D451 Virtual Worlds
D423 Walker v Amy (1Mb)
D112 Stealthy II
D321 Strip Slot Machine X
D185 Elvira Activities
D316 Maria Whitaker Anim (1Mg)
D436 P.D. Animations

music

M061 808 State remixes
M308 Alice Cooper/Star Trek
M105 Another day in paradise
M092 Betty Boo
M200 Bomb the Bass
M149 Don't miss the party line
M306 Erasure Mix
M203 Eurythmics
M015 Genesis
M096 Groove Is In The Heart
M301 Guns & Roses
M098 Hear the Drummer

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slideshows

D462 Invisible World
D443 Doctor Who
D329 Bo-Derek (X)
D416 Gorgeous Models (X)
D442 Gulf War
D129 Maria Whitaker (X)
D130 Sam Fox
D313 Paradise Picture Show (X)
D413 Perverse Slideshow
D435 Rambo Slides
D170 Girls of Sport
D444 Terminator II
D269 Simpsons
D303 Saucy Postcards
D419 Star Trek Megademo – 2 disks – 2 drives – (1Mg)

M310 Joe Le Taxi
M042 Kim Wilde
M100 London Beat
M303 Madonna Rescue Me
M097 Madonna Vogue (4 disks)
M304 Me Hammer Cant touch this
M018 Miami Vice Remix
M302 Money for Nothing
M259 Pet Shop Boys (2 disks)
M307 Poison Sample
M258 Popstar Selection
M091 Queen Flash (2 disks)
M102 Sydney Youngblood
M094 Technotronic
M124 The Power remix (1 Meg)
M031 The Wall
M097 Vogue (4 disks)
M032 Walk this way
M123 What Time is Love
M317 Charley
M318 Utah Saints
M322 Justified & Ancients (2 disks-2 drives)

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We now have FRED FISH 1-580

We now have T-BAG 1-58

games

G001 ALL NEW STAR TREK (2 DISKS – 2 DRIVES – 1MG) – The best Star Trek game around.
G278 AIR ACE II – Enjoyable shoot'em up in planes.
G210 AIRWAR – A large number of flight simulators.
G051 FRANTIC FREDDIE – Brilliant platform game.
G310 SURVIVOR – Outstanding role play game.
G086 PROPERTY MARKET – Find out if you've got a head for business.
G292 SEALANCE – Highly praised submarine game.
G321 SCUM HATERS – Blast the scum out of East London.
G220 STAR TREK (3 DISKS – 2 DRIVES 1MG) – Very impressive.
G277 TRUCKIN 'ON (2 DISKS) – Enjoyable strategy game.
G268 WHEEL OF FORTUNE – Excellent version of TV prog.
G272 WIZZYS QUEST – One of the best platform games.
G342 DOWNHILL CHALLENGE – Great fun skiing game.
G343 POM POM GUNNER – Shoot down those enemy planes.

games compilations

GAMES GALORE VOL 1: – Drip, Bally, Yahzee, Tic Tac Toe, Amoeba, Othello, Tron, Chess, Tiles, Daleks.
GAMES GALORE VOL 2: – Sky-Fight, Kap-Othello, Lam, Jailland, Bouncer, Bluemoon, Welltrix, Wordsearch.
GAMES GALORE VOL 3: – Asteroids, Gravity Wars, Ping Pong, Orbit 3-D, Miniblast, MM, Gravattalk.
GAMES GALORE VOL 4: – Car, Mr Munk, Backgammon, Fgyptian Run, Mutants, Spaceace. Diplomacy, Game Cheats.
GAMES GALORE VOL 5: – Trektrivia, Monopoly, Cosmo, Mazeman, Sys, Pharoh, Dad, Cat & Mouse, Rollon.
GAMES GALORE VOL 6: – Jumpy, King, Raps, Crobots, Death, SB, Tiny, ATC.
GAMES GALORE VOL 7: – Trainset, Yawn, World, Montana, Amiga Worm, Pipeline, Mines, Bounce.
GAMES GALORE VOL 8: – Game Tamer, Space War, Colossal, M-Command, Trippin, Cave Runner, Spaces.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (A) – Battlemech, Bullrun, Superbreakout, Egyptian Run.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (B) – Cos, Stoneage, Othello, Q-Bert, Crystal Vision.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (C) – Hack, Saved Games, Tourist, Knight, Caveman, Spellologist, Wizard, Fighter.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (D) – Monopoly, Puzzle, Asteroids, Deluxe Burger, Mercenary.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (E) – Four, Iff 2 Pcs, Missile Command, Invaders.
MEGA GAMES VOL 1 (F) – Battle, Tit, Descender, Tiles, PA Cannon.
ASSASSINS GAMES 1 – Tanx, Rollerpede, Amigoids, Caverunner, Avatris.
ASSASSINS GAMES 2 – Girl Action, Missile Command, Invaders, Bally2, Maze Game, Think Ahead.

latest games

G348 WORD SQUARE SOLVER – Helps solve wordsquares – surprisingly!
G349 SIMON SAYS/SPACE MATHS – Get your kids to learn sound/colour/maths.
G350 EDUCATION FOR UNDER 10's – Loads of enjoyable/ educational games.
G353 DARK STAFF – Spectrum adventure game now shareware – very entertaining.
G354 AMIOMEGA – Absolutely outstanding role play game.
G355 HOLLYWOOD TRIVIA – Very fine quiz game.

latest demo disks

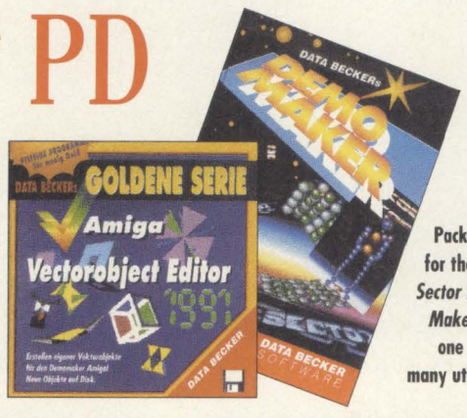
D452 REFLECTIONS RAY TRACED – Unbelievable 3-D pics.
D453 5 STAR TREK ANIMS – Richter on top notch form.
D454 AT THE MOVIES – Further adventures of Schwarzs Army – excellent.
D455 AGRESSOR/SOVIET SOFT LANDING/STEALTH BOMBER – 3 more classic Schwarz anims.
D456 SILENT GLOBAL THRASH – Don't miss this outstanding graffix disk.
D457 TOP GUN DEMO – Every slide accompanied by own sample.
D458 SILENTS BLUESHOUSE – More superb sound + visuals.
D459 EPIC GAME DEMO – Some of the best graffix on P.D.
D460 ALIENS SLIDES – Digitised pics – well produced.
D461 ELVIRA SLIDESHOW – Saucy pics of buxom vamp.
D462 THE INVISABLE WORLD – Excellent reviews for this unusual & fascinating slideshow.
D463 LAUREL & HARDY ANIMS – (2 DISKS -2 DRIVES - 1MG) A collection of animated clips brilliantly presented.
D464 BATMAN, TERMINAL, LATENIGHT – 3 long, amusing Schwarz anims.
D465 WWF SUPERSTARS – Slideshow of big buggers wrestling.

Send £1.00 now for our superb catalogue. There is a demo of the great new D-Paint IV as well as a game, a CLI help file and reviews of well over 1,000 PD Disks.

Mouse Mats available for £2.99 each

PUBLIC DOMAIN NEWS

RED SECTOR DEMO MAKER NOT PD



Packaging for the *Red Sector Demo Maker* and one of its many utilities

The popular demo-making utility, the *Red Sector Demo Maker*, which is widely available from many UK PD libraries, is a pirated commercial product, *Public Domain* can reveal.

Developed by the demo group Red Sector in tandem with Data Becker, a prominent German book and software publishing company, the package and its supporting programs have been commercially available since 1990. According to the company none of the programs have ever been, nor ever will be, PD. The *Demo Maker* program itself has a recommended retail price of DM69 (about £24.60), while the supporting programs are DM29.80 each (or £10.62).

The *Demo Maker* programs that are not PD include the main creator itself as well as its supporting packages: *Font-Ed*, a font editor, and *Vector Object Editor*, which enables the user to create vector objects to use in the main program.

According to Mr Wagner, a spokesman for the company, Data Becker tried to enforce its copyright of the programs through legal channels three months ago, but at the time of writing he is unsure of how this situation stands. Many PD companies are continuing to sell the package which implies that nothing has been legally enforced.

The sequel to the *Red Sector Demo Maker*, the *Multimedia Maker*, is also becoming available from PD libraries under the name *Demo Maker 2*. This new package has been available in Germany for four months and is now making its way across the Channel.

This impressive title screen fronts the *Red Sector Demo Maker*, a commercial program and not PD

Effectively the way the *Red Sector Demo Creator* is being sold and distributed amounts to piracy. Because of the quality of the program, and the lack of awareness libraries have of its origin, the package has proved to be a best seller. This is all income that is being lost by the program's developers and distributors.

For more information, contact Data Becker at: Merowingerstraße 30, 4000 Düsseldorf, Germany ☎ 010 49 211 933102.

Other pirated PD

The *Red Sector Demo Maker* is the latest in a number of commercial programs that have become available from PD libraries. Other examples include:

- ***Cubulus*** – This game by well-known Amiga artist Tobias Richter and musician Bjorn Lynne has been released by a German publishing company
- ***Oktalyser*** – One of the first 8-channel music programs, this program also originates from Germany
- ***X-Copy*** – Another German program, this utility has always been commercially available from Cachet
- ***Tetracopy*** – This utility uses copyrighted routines used in *X-Copy* and is available from a German magazine called *Amiga Special*
- ***Talking Colouring Book* and *Maths Wizard*** – Two education programs commercially available from the American Educational Software Club

If anyone has come across other commercial programs that have been mistakenly released as PD then we'd like to hear about them.

The Response

But were UK libraries know the *Red Sector Demo Maker* was pirated? *Public Domain* contacted the leading Amiga PD libraries:

"We stopped selling it a few weeks ago," says Steve Colbeck of 17 Bit Software. "A lot of libraries don't know if some PD programs are commercial or not. You'd be surprised at just what we get sent."

"I found out about the program over a year ago", said Ray Burt-Frost of Amiganuts, "A friend in Australia told me it was being sold there as a commercial program". The program was withdrawn soon after.

Brian Smith of Vally PD told us: "We withdrew everything to do with it once we were told it was a commercial program. I think everyone was caught out because of Red Sector being a demo crew. This, and the amount of PD not available, means that anyone could be caught out. I just wish the manufacturers of these programs would tell us when this sort of thing happens."

Derivative shareware

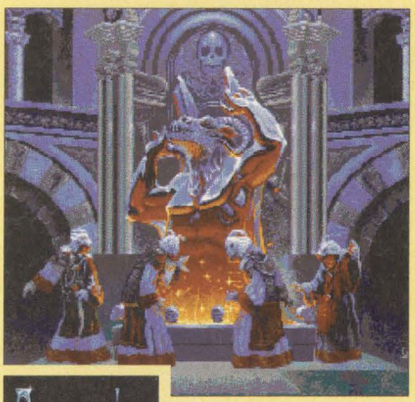
***Derive*, a computer algebra program,** has been incorrectly identified as shareware by some PC shareware libraries. The program is, in fact, a £130 commercial product published by Soft Warehouse. Libraries are requested to remove it from their catalogues.

For more information on the package, contact Chartwell-Bratt, the UK distributor of the program, at: **Old Orchard, Bickley Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 2NE ☎ 081-467 1956.**

Demo Competition

PD library 17 Bit Software is sponsoring a major demo competition organised by well-known Amiga demo coding group, Anarchy.

A number of the top demo crews will be getting together to compete at the event which is planned to take place in April in Barnsley. The aim of is to promote quality Amiga programs. "It should be good for Amiga PD as a whole," says 17 Bit's Steve Colbeck.



Anarchy, creator of *System Violation*, is organising the demo competition

17 Bit Software will be judging the entries to the competition and awarding prizes for the winning demos. All the entries will be released into the public domain.

For more information, contact **17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982**

Cheaper software?

PD.ST is offering PD software for just 60p as long as you send them a disk on which to put the programs.

The scheme has been introduced to try to combat the disk shortage as well as generally reducing the overall cost of the software itself.

For further information, contact PD.ST at: **95 Elton Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 9NF ☎ 0270 762520.**

cont. on p14

cont. from p13

Got any news?

***Public Domain* is always on the look-out for any PD or shareware-related news that may interest our readers.**

If you've come across any information that you think we'd be interested in – good or bad – then we'd be interested to hear from you. If we think our readers should know about it then we'll follow it up.

Send your snippets and stories to: **News, *Public Domain*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

We're on-line too

If you've got a modem, why not leave a message for us on a bulletin board? *Public Domain* is on a number of BBSs, where we've got our own file and message areas. For a quick reply, try calling:

- **Bath BBS: 0225 840060**
- **01 For Amiga: 071-377 1358**

When you're on-line just leave a message to 'Public Domain'. The message can be about anything related to PD and shareware: news, advice, comments on the magazine, it's entirely up to you.

And if you've got a program you'd like to see reviewed, you could upload it to us on the spot.

Dates for your diary:

The All Formats Computer Fair will be at a venue near you soon:

- **March 8 – City Hall, Candleriggs, Glasgow**
- **March 14 – Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London**
- **March 15 – Brunel Centre, Temple Meads, Bristol**
- **March 21 – Donington Park, junction 23A just off the M1 in the East Midlands**
- **March 22 – University Sports Centre, Calverley Street, Leeds.**
- **April 12 – Northumbria Centre, Washington, A194(M).**
- **April 26 – National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham, just off junction 6 of the M42**

For further details ☎ 0225 868100

- **And don't forget the Amiga Shopper Show sponsored by *Public Domain*'s sister magazine. The show will take place from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th May at the Wembley Exhibition Centre ☎ 051-356 5085 for more details.**

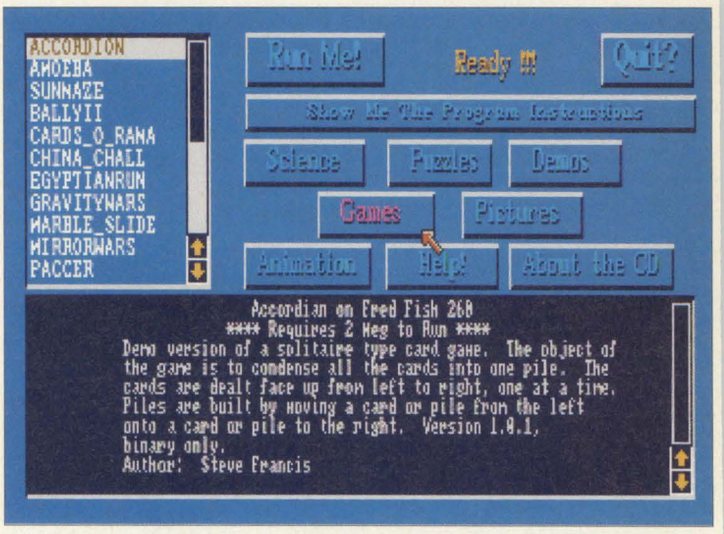
100 FRED FISH PROGRAMS ON A ONE COMPACT DISC

Amiga 500 owners can obtain over 100 Fred Fish PD disks on a single compact disc.

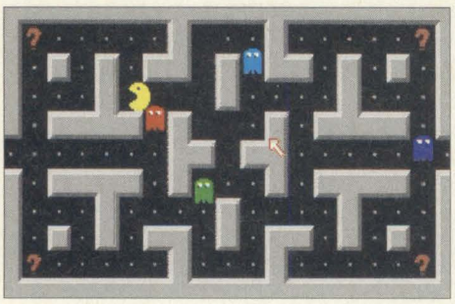
The disc has been released to coincide with the launch of the A690 CD-ROM drive for the Amiga, which should be available in the shops now.

The *Fred Fish Collection* is a compilation of utilities, games, animations and pictures that have been sourced from the well-known library of Fred Fish disks. All these programs, which would normally fill 100 3.5-inch disks, have been compiled on to the one compact disc.

American Fred Fish should be a name familiar to most Amiga PD enthusiasts. He was responsible for starting the first Amiga PD library in the early days of the Amiga. Currently his collection consists of over 570 disks, and additional disks are released regularly.



One of the 100 programs included on the *Fred Fish Collection* for the Amiga CD-ROM drive



Be the first on your block to play *Pacman* off CD-ROM, just one of the many programs in the *Fred Fish Collection*

Because the disk has to be run from Workbench, only Amiga 500 users with the A690 drive, or CDTV owners with Workbench, an external drive and, for some programs, a keyboard, will be able to use the disc.

The A690 plugs into the side of the Amiga 500 and enables the machine to use discs for the Commodore CDTV. These discs can store over 500Mb of data, which is approximately the amount that can be stored on 640 standard Amiga floppy disks.

With this much data capable of being stored on a single CD, which is relatively inexpensive to produce, how long it will be before entire PD collections are available on one disc?

The *Fred Fish Collection* should be available from most stockists of CDTV software. For more information on the A690 CD-ROM drive, contact Commodore ☎ 0628 770088.

C Hack's no more

ST PD library Captain Hack's PD has closed down after being in operation for about two years.

As a result of the closure, the company's entire disk collection has been picked up by the recently-formed Rust PD library.

While Captain Hack's mainly concentrated on demos, Rust PDL will be offering a wider range of programs, including utilities and applications.

For further information, Rust PDL can be contacted on: 361 Ordonance Road, Enfield, Middlesex ☎ 0992 717828.

CAPTAIN HACK'S PDL.
CATALOGUE DISK
I'M BACK!
PDC OFFICER HACK REPORTING FOR DUTY FIRST PERP TO BE HAULED IN, CRIME....
USING ANOTHER PD LIBRARY

A reminder of days gone by: the intro to the Captain Hack's PD catalogue disk. Now the library is no more...

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* **5213 Billpower** – billing/accounts (3)
5239 Cash Flow Calculator
5252 Cashflow Accounting
5291 Checkmate General Ledger
* **5304 DAYO Accounts Payable (2)**
* **5330 DAYO Accounts Receivable (2)**
* **5343 DAYO General Ledger**
* **5356 DAYO Time & Billing (2)**
5369 Depreciation Calculator
5408 Finman (small business accounts)
5421 FM II-Accounts Payable (2)
5434 FM II-Accounts Receivable
5395 FM II General Ledger
5447 General Ledger (small business)
* **5460 Rosewood Sales Journal**
* **5473 TCB-Accounts Payable (2)**
* **5486 TCB-Accounts Receivable (2)**
* **5499 TCB-General Ledger (2)**
* **5512 TCB-Inventory/Stock Accounting (2)**
* **5525 TCB-POS Invoicing (2)**
5538 Time is Money Invoicing
5551 Timekeeping Billing

COMMS

15301 Eazilink
15314 Telemate
15327 Telix

BUSINESS GENERAL

* **6617 AppTRAK,** applicant tracker
6630 AttendX, attendance monitor
7007 Personnel Supervisor, database control (1)
* **6656 Contact Plus,** contact manager
6669 CostBiz, job cost program
* **6682 Leadman,** personal contact organiser
* **6695 Logit,** computer usage logger
6708 Material N'Book, small company inventory
* **6721 MORFORM,** forms management system (2)
* **6734 MT-Tracker,** client/project tracker (4)
6747 PayUp! invoicing/customer DBMS
* **6760 PC-Form,** forms manager, generator
* **6773 PC-Mechanic,** maint management system
6786 PC-Shift, job shift scheduler
* **6799 PowerQuote,** quotation/invoicing system
6812 Price Search, track prices/suppliers etc
6825 Sales-Biz, sales tracker
6838 TBS Vehicle Maintenance system
* **6851 TeleSale 4.0,** prospect tracker
* **6877 Easy Project,** EZ project manager
* **6890 Optima,** project management (1)
* **6903 TaskMan,** task & project tracker
* **6916 TaskMaster,** project management
* **6929 Tickler V5.8,** off scheduler/tracker (4)
6942 Formgen V4.0, forms designer/maker

WORD PROCESSING ETC

* **1690 20-20,** Large Type WP
* **1729 ASCII Browser**
1755 TV Script WP
1768 Black Magic Hypertext (4)
* **1820 DTDearch** text retriever
* **1885 FSText Style Analyser**
* **2639 Grab-Plus Mail Manager (2)**
2301 PHRase 2.4 Grammar Checker
* **1950 HeLPyoURSelf Hypertext** (TSR)
1963 Hype V1.62 doc creator
* **2067 KAMAS Outliner**
* **2080 Kwikwrite Executive WP**
* **2171 NOVA WP**
5184 Outline Plus
2210 PC-Browse
2236 PC-Outline
2249 PC-Index
* **2275 PC-Write (3)**
2288 PC-Write Lite (2)
2132 Word Fugue, WP (2)
* **2353 Readability Plus,** style analyser
2366 Readwrite, TSR word counter
2418 Screenplay Formatter
2548 Thesaur Plus
* **2587 WDM** (new WP)
2626 ZippyPrint (1 page WP)
* **1911 Galaxy-Lite**
3341 Chi, text editor

DATABASES (DBMS)

4212 Cardex Rotary File
* **4225 Data Pal,** list/label manager
4238 DBF Manager
* **4251 Dlite TSR**
4264 File Express (3)
4277 Filebase
4290 Freeform
* **4303 Information Please**
4316 MemoMaster
* **4329 PC-Data Controller DBMS**
4342 PRofile Professional DBMS
4355 SR-Info
4368 Wampum
* **4381 PC-File V5.0 (4)**

SPREADSHEETS/STATS

* **1001 Alite**
* **1014 As Easy As**
1027 ExpressCalc (2)
1040 Goalseeker
1053 KDCalc Calculator
1066 KwikStat
* **1079 Morsoft Calculator**
1092 Onside
1105 PC-Calc+ (3)
1118 PC-Stat
1131 Pivot
1157 Qbecalc
1170 Turbocalc

HOBBY AND LEISURE

8021 BABY! 12,000 names list
* **8034 Brothers Keeper,** family history (4)
* **8047 Calendar Keeper,** maker/database
* **8060 CD-MSTR,** cd/tape indexer etc
8073 Coinbase 2.3, collectors database
* **8086 Collector,** collectables database
8125 EZ-Tree, genealogy/family history
* **8138 Household Register,** home inventory
* **8151 Personal Nutritionist,** diet analyser
* **8164 Pop-O-Dex,** dialling phone directory
8177 PostBase, stamp collection manager
8190 RAD3 Home Library, database
* **8203 Resume,** produce your own
8216 Roots Master, family tree etc
* **8229 SANDD Movie Guide,** film database (2)
* **8242ScheduleMaker,** students class scheduler
* **8255 Software Cataloguer**
* **8268 The Better Diet Analyser**
* **8281 VC Library,** video cataloguer
9807 Book of Changers, I Ching
9139 Personal Tarot
9178 By The Numbers, numerology
9126 Mayan Calendar

HOME FINANCE

5915 BudgetMan, Personal Finance
* **5928 Capital Gainz,** Portfolio manager
5941 Cash Control
* **5954 CheckMate Plus (2)**
* **5967 CheckPRO,** chequebook/finance
5980 Cheque-IT-Out
* **5993 CM Cash Manager**
* **6006 EZ-Finance,** Personal Finance
6019 Fastbucks, Home Finance (2)
* **6045 HBMS,** Home Budget Management System
* **6071 MoneyMizer,** Home Accounts (4)
6084 PC-BillMaster, chequebook manager
* **6097 PC-Budget V2.3,** Home Budget
* **6110 PMIS-Home DBMS**

GRAPHICS/CAD

* **10608 Alchemy,** image file format convtr
* **10621 BabyDraw,** kids drawing program
* **10634 Draft Choice,** CAD program
* **10647 EEDraw,** electronics schematics
10660 EZ-Screen, image editor/display utility
* **10673 FLODRAW,** flow chart drawing (2)
* **10686 GIPHEX,** gif/pcx convertor
10699 PC-DraftCAD, fully featured CAD (3)
* **10712 PC-GraphIT,** easy graphs
* **10725 PC-Images,** slide show maker
10738 PC-Keydraw, graphics (4)
* **10751 Postmaster,** poster maker
* **10764 PrintPartner,** banners, signs, calendars
* **10777 Quick Titles,** large ASCII fonts
* **10790 TurboPaint V1.5,** new version!
* **10803 VUIMAGE,** gif/gif89/tiff viewer & more
* **10920 Fractinct,** fractal viewer (1)

EDUCATIONAL

* **13208 DOSEA V2,** hypertext MS-DOS tutorials (4)
* **13221 PC-Glossary,** computer terms (best seller)
* **13234 PC-AI,** tutorial/instruction composer
13247 PC-FASTYPE, typing tutorial
13260 Quic-Type, typing skill game
* **13273 Tutorial Writer,** teachers toolkit
13286 TestWriter, test writing program
* **13299 Touch Typing Tutor**

UTILITIES

* **9308 4DOS V2.3 (2)**
* **9321 4ZIP for 4 DOS**
* **9334 ALPHA,** shell program launcher
* **9347 ANSI-Mate,** ansi batch file maker
9360 DBS-Kat, diskette cataloguer (1)
9373 FileBoss, directory manager
* **9386 HDM,** menued security manager
* **9412 McFee's File Shield**
* **9425 McFee's VShield**
* **9438 PKMENU,** shell for PKZip etc
* **10023 PKZip, PKUnzip,** utilities V1.10
* **9464 PowerBatch,** batch file compiler
* **9477 Rock Directory Manager**
9490 WISS, diskette cataloguer (3)

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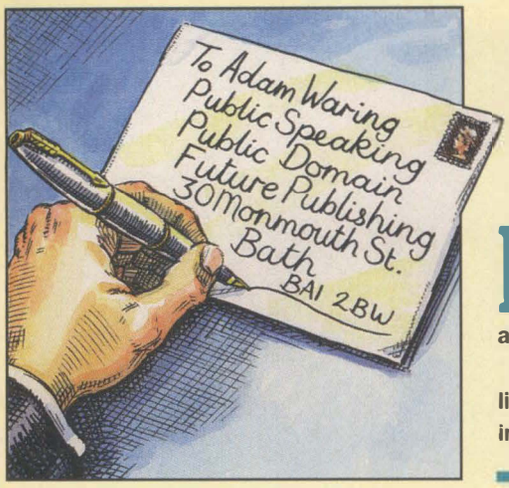


Public Speaking

Public domain and shareware is all well and good, but, be honest, there must be something that really gets your back up about this free software lark.

Don't rant and rave in the corner of your living room, put your feelings down on paper instead. I'll lend an understanding ear, and you may even win a tenner for the best letter of the month. Ah, I thought that might be a bit of an attention grabber...

Send your letters to me, Adam Waring, at: Public Speaking, *Public Domain*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Plus points

I am writing with a couple of requests for future issues of *Public Domain*:

1 First, would it be possible to annotate reviews of PD software that is compatible with the A500 Plus? From recent experience it would appear that a lot of older programs are going to be inaccessible to Plus owners owing to compatibility problems.

2 Disk collections, such as Fred Fish and T-Bag – any chance of a brief overview of what these seemingly vast collections have to offer? For example, I recently purchased Fred Fish #31, only to find that the *Life* program I bought the disk for had a much-improved version on disk #131!

3 Lastly, thanks very much for your user-friendly Tri-format disks. The programs themselves are very good, but why give away *Text Engine 1.0* and then give a rave review of version two in the actual magazine? That said, *Text Engine* is great. My registration fee is in the post - so hopefully I'll get the update!

Chris Barham,
4 Regt Army Air Corps

Thanks for your comments, Chris. Here goes with a few answers:

1 Every program reviewed is now tested for Plus compatibility and the results are mentioned in the header of each review. At the moment programs are flagged if they are compatible. Eventually we should see a situation like the Atari STE, where the majority of software works fine with the the new hardware. In the meantime, though, it's wise to always ring a library to check before sending off your cash!

2 We are planning a feature on the Fish and T-Bag collections in the not too distant future, though it would be impossible to list them all - there are over 500 Fish disks alone now!

3 When compiling the disk our objective is to provide the best possible PD and shareware software but we still have to find stuff that will fit! We always try to provide a balanced selection of software and doing so for three machines isn't always that easy! **Adam**

Crippling shareware

WINNER £10

I have been using PD and shareware for many years and have recently noticed the passing off of crippled software as shareware. With true shareware the registered version should be the same or a later version of the registered product. Crippled 'shareware' is nothing more than demonstration software – a concept that has been around for a long time. Companies are jumping on the shareware bandwagon as a cheap form of advertising. Even your magazine has been guilty in some of the software distributed on the cover disks.

M Richard
Rochdale

Software available from libraries and bulletin boards that is crippled in some way is known as bannerware. It is intended, more or less, as an advert for the full-blown product. Usually there is no requirement to register and you can use this demo version as much as you like, but obviously if you intend to use the program for any serious use, then you don't have much choice but to buy the full version.

To a certain extent, you can't blame authors for releasing software in this way. After all, it's all to easy to conveniently 'forget' about sending off the registration fee.

There is another side to the coin. If a piece of software is so badly crippled that it becomes quite unusable in its freely-distributable form, then who's going to register for a seemingly worthless program? **Adam**

Getting what you pay for

After seeing certain programs reviewed in a recent issue of *Public Domain* I ordered the disks from a reputable PD library, only to discover that the library could not obtain these titles. A helpful policy of this library is to obtain titles that it may not have in its listing, so why was it unable to obtain supposedly public domain software from another library?

Interestingly enough, the libraries that seem to be refusing to sell their disks to other libraries are the £3-a-disk ones while those that obtain any title are amongst the very cheapest...

To put paid to the myth that, "you get what you pay for", in my experience the service offered by the more expensive libraries is absolutely no different to that provided by the £1-a-disk bracket and the titles on offer are no different either.

F M Havicon
Haywards Heath, Sussex

PD software is freely-distributable and so any library has the right to distribute any piece of PD. It seems a shame that a minority of organisations try and keep the software to themselves; after all PD software is for everyone's benefit and the more that people have access to it, the better.

There does seem to be quite a range in prices quoted by different libraries, but remember that a larger organisation may have additional overheads to keep them running smoothly; staff to pay, office space to rent and so on. When does the price of obtaining 'free' software become unreasonable? I'd be interested in hearing your comments... **Adam**

Copy cats

Having read the disk copying article in issue four of your magazine, I just felt that I had to put pen to paper.

1 How, on one hand, can you say that copying commercial software is illegal and on the other put a powerful copying program on your cover disk?

2 Most people, including myself, have at some time used copied software. But before I go any further I'm not going to get into the usual argument on the ethics of piracy. The copying of commercial software is illegal; that is the law of the land and I will support that.

However, I will not support the fact that copying it for your own use is. I have and always will back-up my valuable software. When I first got into computers way back in 1980 the first lesson I ever learnt was to 'make a back-up of your master disk.' If you pay a lot of money for a program you make sure you look after it. If your master disk gets damaged then most companies will charge you for a replacement.

You paid for the software in the first place, you should not have to pay for it again.

J B Palmer
Warblington,
Hampshire

1 Yes, copying commercial software is illegal. But the inclusion of a disk copying program does

not mean it has to be used to break the law. As the article points out, many public domain disks, such as ambitious demos, use disk formats that cannot be copied by normal means. It's also true that most computers' in-built disk copying functions are slow and tedious to use. A disk copier can turn this chore into something a little more bearable.

2 There is no provision in the law that gives you the right to back-up commercial software, yet it is not unreasonable to want to do so, especially when full-priced products can be so expensive. It seems to me that the best protection concerned software houses can offer is the use of security devices with their software. Even if the software is copied, it's pretty useless without the other parts of the package.

That's why shareware is such an ideal means of distributing software – there's none of this concern about piracy; the more people who copy a shareware program the better! Check out the Jeff Minter interview on page 36 if you don't believe me... **Adam**

Three for the price of one

Although the tri-format disk is fine, I'd like to see a disk for each format. I know this would increase the cost, but I think it would be worth it. After all, who couldn't afford the extra pound or so per month?

I have an ST and so could only use one of the three disks. The other two could be formatted and used for another purpose. The advantage would be that rather than a few sample programs, each disk could be packed full of goodies and would save readers sending off for the juicy software that you review.

If you are unsure whether the idea would work, why not ask your readers?

Peter Kerr
Johnstone, Strathclyde

Three disks with each issue? Now there's a thought. But one that, I think, wouldn't work terribly well. I think that most people would find it a pain, rather than a boon, having a couple of disks that are only any good for formatting on the front of the magazine.

You'd get more for your machine, sure, but the extra disks would add considerably to our production costs. Would you really be prepared to pay that much more for a magazine?

The cost would be more prohibitive than you think, Peter. But as you suggest, I'll throw it open to our readers. What do you think? **Adam**

Would you credit it?

I am writing regarding the points made by Andrew Miller (issue four) on the subject of shareware payment. Your suggestion that we could pay by credit card causes warning bells to ring in my mind quite loudly.

1 Although I appreciate that most of us are honest (ahem), it seems rather a big risk to take sending what's more or less an open cheque to a foreign country with all the hassle and fuss involved in attempting to regain the balance of a, possibly perfectly innocent, overpayment.

2 I think that some method that does not cost a lot ought to be arranged. A number of people, including myself, would be more prepared to pay for the shareware we are using if it weren't for the methods we have at the moment being too expensive or difficult.

This is one reason why I like dealing with British shareware companies like Nildram software. Their stuff is good and there's no trouble in paying for it.

David Mitchell
Clacton-on-Sea

I can understand your concern at sending sums of money, in whatever form , overseas, David.

1 However, remember that every time you use your credit card you're giving away your number which, theoretically, any dishonest shopkeeper could use. Any order made over the phone doesn't require the holder's signature for authorisation but is a facility that many of us find extremely useful.

However, I'm sure that the credit organisations have safeguards against this sort of theft. You can rest assured that anyone trying it on with them would soon find themselves blacklisted and more than likely in a rather sticky legal situation.

2 Many of the British shareware companies have struck deals with overseas authors already. Both Nildram software and the PSA act as bodies to collect fees for foreign authors. **Adam**

PDQ answers your Pretty Difficult Questions!

These pages are the place to write to if you've got any opinions to express about the magazine, PD in general or just a little chat. However, if you have a query that's technical, don't write to me – write to PDQ instead.

PDQ will burst its batteries trying to help answer all those tricky techie teasers. Check out this month's batch of binary brain-benders on page 70.

X-ray vision

Will you please try and kill the myth that X-rays can damage floppy disks (Peter Hunter's letter, issue 3). The idea seems to be absurdly widespread as I frequently receive packages stamped 'magnetic media – do not X-ray'. Perhaps there is some confusion between the effects of X-rays on photographic film and magnetic surfaces.

Floppy disks are tough, though I do not suggest you make a habit of storing them on top of loudspeakers or under your telephone. Should you do so by accident it is unlikely to be disastrous. You are far more likely to damage a disk by dropping cigarette ash on it or leaving it to cook on the back window of a car. You will never damage it by exposing it to an X-ray machine.

Mike Kirk
Geneva, Switzerland

I'm no expert on the physical properties of X-rays, but I'll take your word for it! **Adam**

Stranded in Scotland

At last I have found a magazine that does not review software that requires the most recent Cray computer to run, or needs enough cards to start a shop. But as a home PC user I do have some difficulty in finding public domain software houses.

As a student I have access to the university network system JANET. I would like to know if I am able to connect to PD libraries via this system and if so how do I go about it?

I do have a small gripe to make about the adverts in your magazine, though: it's all very well telling potential customers about the the software you have in stock, but it would be even nicer if you also actually told us what computers the software operates on!

Jock Stewart
Path of Condie,
Perthshire

Most libraries operate on a mail order basis, so it's unlikely you'll find any in Path of Condie. Bulletin boards, however, work over the phone lines. You can hook up to one with a modem (your university has one to access JANET), but make sure you ask the head of your computer department for permission first!

Well, advertisers, make sure you're clear – it's for your own good! **Adam**

Sounds like Pacman

With reference to your review of *Pacman 87*, the shareware game for the Amiga reviewed in the February issue of *Public Domain*, there are effects and sound! All you have to do is pull down the menu, place the mouse arrow on the relevant section and turn on the sound.

Roberta Smith
London

I stand corrected!

When we review programs we try to make every effort possible to make sure that we check out all the features.

However, because of the number of programs we review each month, we do miss things occasionally. Er, terribly sorry! **Adam**

There *is* sound in *Pacman 87*, it's just that thicky Mr Stupid-pants (ie, me) missed it completely. What a doofus!

On the right track

Thanks to computers, electronic instruments and a handy system known as MIDI you no longer need to be a musical genius to produce multi-layered melodic masterpieces. And thanks to the public domain and shareware the software needn't set you back a fortune either. Nial Grimes faces the music...

Take a look at the current Top 20 and you'll be lucky to find a single track that does not have some electronically-created sounds somewhere in their production. It's easy enough to spot the digital influence on many dance tracks – they're full of strange noises which are obviously not naturally produced – but even a lot of instruments that sound 'real' might just be the product of a synthesiser. Guitars, pianos, trumpets, even choirs – a synth can imitate the lot, and hundreds more besides.

Modern dance music has really taken full advantage of the synth and there have been countless examples of scorching hot tracks that have been laid down in some cred teenager's bedroom using just one keyboard to produce all the different instrument sounds. But a synth alone is not capable of doing this; even the most basic songs are built up from layers (or tracks) of music playing simultaneously. And that's where computers, and more specifically, MIDI comes to the rescue.

The MIDI (or Musical Instrument Digital Interface) standard was developed by the world's music giants primarily to enable electronic instruments from different manufacturers to be connected together – a Korg synth, for instance, could now be connected to a Roland drum machine, without difficulty.

A spin-off of this technology is that any computer with the right interface can be linked in a chain of MIDI devices and can, providing it sends the right messages, appear to be playing the synth all on its own! And as MIDI provides a number of channels, the computer can also be persuaded to play several instruments simultaneously!

To whom do we owe this advance? Good old Atari! The release of the ST with its built-in MIDI interface in 1984 signalled a change in the way musicians viewed computers; they were now a valuable tool, and companies such as Steinberg and

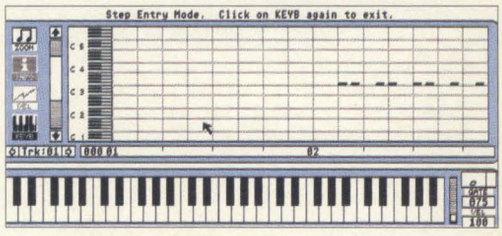
"The concept of multi-track recording means that a whole record can be produced by a single musician, a synth and a computer."

C-Lab were quick to release software to allow the ST to communicate with musical equipment. The sequencer, as we know it, was born...

Sequence of events

A sequencer is simply a piece of software designed to record, play and edit the notes produced by a MIDI instrument. Each note is recorded as an 'event' by the computer along with information on changes of instrument – known as 'program changes' – and changes in volume, pitch and so on – known as 'control changes'.

It's difficult to appreciate how handy a sequencer can be until you've actually seen one in action. At the most basic level, you could view a sequencer as a replacement for the 'record' function on a synth. Simply press the record button on the screen, play your ditty on the synth's keyboard and press stop when you've finished: the piece can then be saved to disk for later use.



Step editing makes it easy for even the most inexperienced keyboard player to keep all the tracks in time

But a sequencer is capable of much more than acting as a computerised tape recorder. Imagine you decide the timing is awful on the tune you have just recorded. A Quantise function will allow you to draw

Jargon Busters ● Jargon Busters ● Jargon Busters ● Jargon Busters

MIDI is a minefield of complicated jargon that seems to have been invented specifically to confuse and put off the uninitiated. But don't worry because *Public Domain* can help out all you novices. Here are some of the more common terms to guide you on your quest for beautiful music.....

MIDI – Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a standard devised by the world's music giants to allow easy inter-connection of electronic musical devices (phew!)

MULTI-TIMBRAL – Multi-timbral devices can play several instruments sounds simultaneously. This means, for example, that a multi-timbral keyboard is able to play the bass, percussion and melody of a tune without the assistance of another MIDI device (except the computer, obviously!)

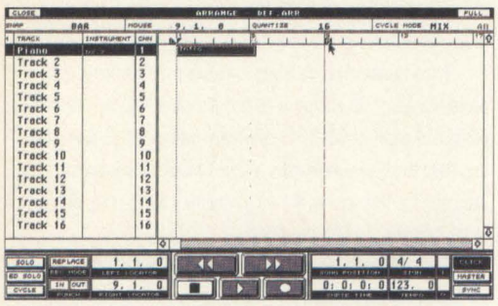
PATCH – An antiquated term used to describe sound created and stored by a synthesiser (probably only aging musos and dinosaur progressive rock bands use the term now).

POLYPHONIC – The ability to play several notes simultaneously. A good polyphonic keyboard will be able to play a minimum of 28 notes simultaneously.

PROGRAM/CONTROL CHANGE – A message sent by the sequencer to change the instrument or 'effects' (volume, vibrato, pitch, duration etc) on a synthesiser. A change of instrument is known as a program change; a change in effect is a called a control change.

QUANTISATION – This adjusts the notes, either incoming or recorded, to give perfect timing. Over quantising can give an inhuman, almost robotic, feel to the music.

SEQUENCER – A piece of software or a device used to control one or a number of MIDI devices. Computers are now used almost universally to sequence music, although MIDI modules to accomplish similar results are still available. Completed songs are pieced together from various tracks using sequencers.

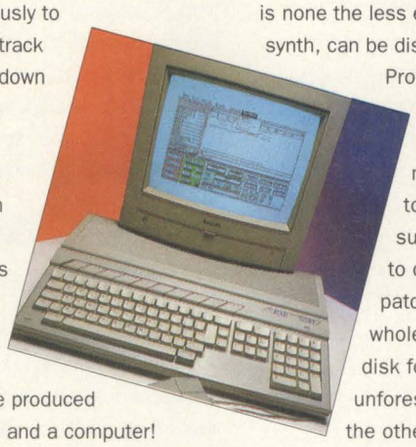


***Cubase* is a relative of one the pioneers of MIDI software – *Steinberg Pro 24*. Quality *without* the £449 price tag!**

the notes back on to the timing signals, giving perfect timing. Some of the more advanced sequencers (such as *Alchimie Junior*) also offer a Humanise option, to bring the music into time but with slight variations and so avoiding the robotic feel so common in over-quantised music.

Of course, the best way to ensure your music really sounds good is to play it in time in the first place. This is made significantly easier by the ability to Step Record or play your tune slowly a note at a time. When played back, the music will revert to the correct speed and with any luck will sound more like the masterpiece you intended it to be. Once recorded, most sequencers also offer the option to Grid Edit or rearrange the music on the stave for some really fine tuning.

But there remains the most powerful feature offered by modern sequencers, namely, multi-track recording. Instead of a whole band having to play their instruments simultaneously to obtain the final sound, multi-track recording enables you to lay down one track at a time, a bit like overdubbing in a studio. And once you've recorded a track you can play it back, either in isolation or in combination with other pre-recorded tracks while recording the next. In short, the concept of multi-track recording literally means a whole record can be produced by a single musician, a synth and a computer!



A sound move?

Sequencers are the main way to communicate with your synth but are not the only type of MIDI software available. There are lots of utilities and smaller programs that make your work that much easier, the majority of which are public domain or shareware.

Most MIDI utilities are hardware dependent and only work on a particular type of synthesiser, making the public domain the ideal means of distribution. Software which may not be commercially viable, but is none the less essential to the owners of a certain synth, can be distributed freely to whoever needs it.

Probably the most important and useful of these utilities is the patch editor and librarian. The majority of synthesisers enable you to adjust the on-board sounds to suit your needs, but what if you need to change them on a regular basis? A patch librarian will let you download a whole bank of sounds and save them to disk for later use – very handy for unforeseen disasters. A patch editor on the other hand enables you to edit and create sounds on a reasonably-sized screen (as opposed to the single line liquid crystal displays found on so many synths).

MIDI software, in common with most music-related equipment, is usually very expensive. Top

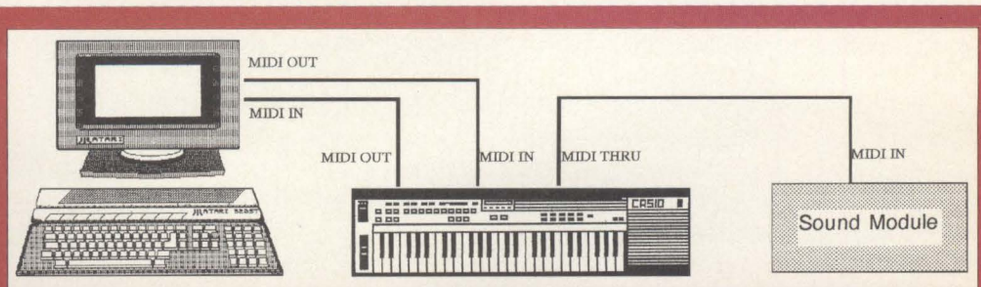
cont. on p20

How does it all work then?

The MIDI standard uses a five-pin DIN connection for communication between instruments. Each instrument is joined together via a short cable using one of three connections: MIDI OUT, MIDI IN or MIDI THRU.

At the most basic level the MIDI OUT from your computer will be connected to the MIDI IN on your synth and vice versa. This enables the computer to control or play the synth and also for the synth to send information to the computer for recording or editing. The MIDI THRU connection is simply (as far as the instrument is concerned) a replica of the MIDI OUT on your computer. Using MIDI THRU, a chain of MIDI devices can can be built: in most cases only the synth will need to send information to the computer and therefore is the only device on which the MIDI OUT has to be used.

When a note is struck on the keyboard, a series of numbers is sent around the MIDI network. Each number represents a note (in much the same way as a number represents a letter using the ASCII system). This MIDI data will be prefixed by the channel under which it should play. Each MIDI instrument is given one or a number of channels to which to respond: it can therefore be ensured that only the required MIDI instrument will respond to a message. A multi-timbral synth can be assigned several MIDI channels: one for percussion, one for bass and one for melody, for example (beginning to see how handy a multi-timbral synth can be?)



A simple MIDI network. This method can be used to add up to four MIDI devices to your computer. Beyond this point, delays can occur (which make getting the tracks to match up very difficult) and a device called a MIDI splitter box has to be used

cont. from p19

titles such as *Notator*, *Cubase* and *KCS* are likely to cost you anywhere from £200 to £600, in other words, as much as a decent synthesiser! Can PD really provide a viable alternative?

In the case of the ST at least, the answer is a resounding YES! The quality of PD software available for this traditional music-makers' machine is truly stunning. Amiga and PC owners will also find some sequencers and truly excellent utilities. As shareware, some of the programs will need registration; even so, how much commercial software could you buy for *Accompanist*'s £10 registration fee? Have a browse through this lot and be amazed at what you can can achieve with PD and shareware MIDI software... PD

Accompanist 2.4 (Shareware)

ST • MUS36 • 512K • Registration fee £10 • Softville, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Elettra Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XN ☎ 0705 266509

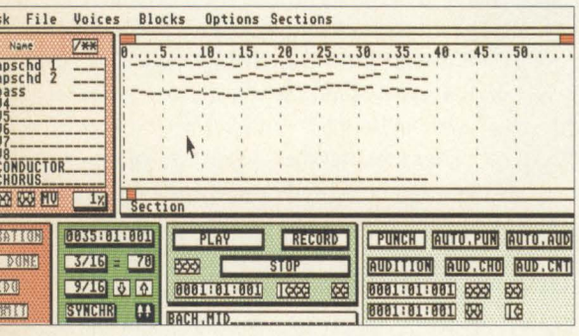
For the patriotic who like to buy British the *Accompanist*, written by Henry Cosh, does a good job of flying the flag. Rather than being a one-off, purely commercial venture, *Accompanist* was written to serve a specific purpose and then released as shareware. As a result, the program is updated regularly, each new release solving many problems or short-comings found in earlier versions. Welcome additions to the latest version (2.4) include the ability to import standard MIDI format data files for song exchange with other machines and an improved manual. Sixteen voices are provided for sequencing with a possible 10,000 notes on a standard ST, rising to 60,000 for machines with 1Mb or greater – plenty of room to breathe there! The screen is uncluttered and all editing features that are not to be found on the main screen are just a mouse-click away in the GEM menu bar.

A definite advantage of the Cosh sequencer (as it has become known) is the ability to use the ST's sound chip as output. While this may not provide chart success, it's handy to get a rough idea of the way your masterpiece is going to sound without having to link up to a synth.

Accompanist is not as complex as the competition but in some ways this is an advantage – easy to use, easy to master and, above all, runs on all ST's from 520K upwards. It's a point well worth considering when you look at how few sequencers there are (including commercial ones) that support the vanilla ST.

No complaints as far as operations are concerned – everything works faultlessly, and for once it looks like some thought has gone into the dialogue boxes. Great package, good manual, reasonable registration fee – get it!

ST **92%**

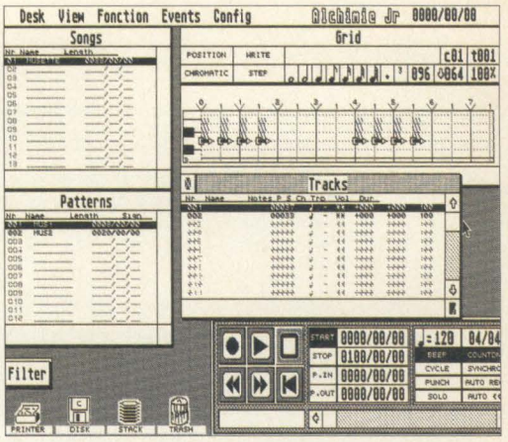


***Accompanist* – fast, flexible and dead easy to use. That can't be bad for a mere £10 registration fee, can it?**

Alchimie Junior (Shareware)

ST • 1Mb • Mono • Registration fee: discretionary • Prosoft Informatique, D Canevesi & D Crettol, La Redoute 18, CH-1260 Rolle, Switzerland

With 1992 upon us, it's about time we saw some good European shareware this side of the channel. *Alchimie Junior* is the latest piece to hit our shores and the manual boldly claims it to be a full-featured (don't they all?), multitasking, MIDI editing suite – all for a discretionary (pay what you think it's worth) fee. The unusual thing about *Alchimie Junior* is that it actually delivers the goods!



Who needs commercial software? *Alchimie Junior* contains all of the features most commercial sequencers provide, and more!

From the moment you load the program it just screams professionalism. All editing is carried out via a VCR-style control panel and once the basic principles are understood all operations are quite intuitive – helped by a suite of icons. For instance, dragging the disk icon to the song window loads a song, dragging it to the trash can deletes it – simple.

The editing screen is split into four basic windows catering for Songs (to a maximum of 16), Patterns (to a maximum of 256) and Tracks (to a maximum of 256, or a whopping 4096 using superimposition!) Being pattern-based, *Alchimie Junior* relies on the mixing of separately-recorded patterns to form songs: users of programs such as *Noisetracker* will find this approach very familiar.

A reference manual together with quick start guide are supplied on-disk and, although it is evident that a translation has been made from French, the information is presented clearly; better, in fact, than many English manuals!

Alchimie Junior is yet another program that proves shareware can be every bit as good as commercial software. If you are looking to get involved in MIDI with shareware, or if you are thinking of buying a commercial package for that matter, look no further – *Alchimie* is the biz!

ST **95%**

MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits • MIDI Bits

All this talk of MIDI music, creating chart hits and generally becoming very famous very quickly has probably whetted your appetite so that you want to give it a try yourself. Whatever your ambitions, you won't get far without an instrument; here's a quick look at that various types of MIDI equipment available:

SYNTHESISER – The basic building block: the standard synth will usually have upwards of 50 internal sounds and a built-in keyboard. Most home models will contain internal amplification and can also provide auto-accompaniment and percussion.

SYNTH MODULE – A module is simply a synth without the keyboard. Using the MIDI standard it can be controlled by a 'mother keyboard', which can be another synth or a computer keyboard.

WORKSTATION SYNTH – This new generation of MIDI equipment is the complete solution for the professional MIDI musician. Unlike previous synths the workstation includes sampled percussion sounds and a sequencer so that in theory you won't need to link up to a computer to produce multi-tracked results (although once you've used a computer-based sequencer, moving to a two-line 'digital watch'-style display is not much of an advance!)

SAMPLER – Probably the most controversial piece of MIDI equipment available; the sampler allows real world sounds to be recorded and played back at variable frequencies. This gives a complete musical scale from one sound, so, for example, you could you play the whole of *I Should Be So Lucky* using a sampled grunt from a pregnant warthog with digestive problems. It also makes it incredibly easy to 'borrow' sounds from other artists' songs!

DRUM MACHINE – A drum machine is a module capable of producing a variety of drum sounds. This is becoming less of a necessity as many synths now have drum sounds built-in, but it's still a valuable tool for those really repetitive, irritating drum tracks!

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Manufacturers now produce MIDI versions of other traditional instruments – guitars, saxophones, xylophones, the list is endless!

Thanks to 'The Music Station' (☎ 0792 775751) and Maff Evans of Amiga Format for kindly supplying all the equipment used in the preparation of this feature.

But do the pros use PD?

MIDI music is all about experience – once you have a winning formula the sky's the limit (look at Kylie Minogue!) We tracked down professional MIDI musician and PD fan Steve Rees to see whether he thought PD had a place in the recording studio...

PD: OK, Steve, first tell us a little bit about the hardware set-up that you use.
STEVE REES: My kit consists of a 4Mb STE, Korg M1 synthesiser, Yamaha RX-5 drum machine and an MKS-20 piano module. That's at the moment. It will probably be totally different by the time anyone reads this!

Why do you use a computer for sequencing?
The computer has been a revelation to me. I had been using a QX-3 sequencer module until a friend of mine showed me his ST. I went out and bought one straight away! It's the difference between a Skoda and a Ferrari – you'll get there in a Skoda but the Ferrari will take you there a lot quicker and in a lot more style.

Does PD software have a place in the music industry?
PD is great. The idea that it's useless because it's cheap is just not true. The cost of commercial sequencing software is prohibitively expensive. *Cubase* and *Creator* are great, but if you are starting out in MIDI, you want to be as economical as possible. Using PD or shareware means you can afford to spend the money on a decent synth! I just wish somebody would take the initiative and supply some printed instructions with the packages – I would say that's the main thing stopping more people using PD or shareware sequencers.

Have you got any tips for prospective MIDI musicians?
Where do you want me to start?! A multi-timbral synth is important – it's just not worth the money you save on buying anything less. As for actually producing a tune, make sure your percussion and bass are really tight – you can afford to use quite a lot of quantisation on these elements. It's amazing how many feeble melodies are propped up by a decent backing track!

CakeWalk (Bannerware)

PC • MPC3 • CGA/EGA/VGA • 1Mb • Softville, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Elettra Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XN ☎ 0705 266509

CakeWalk is distributed under the *Sound on Sound* (Magazine) shareware scheme. To call it shareware is a little bit of an exaggeration, owing to the fact that you have to register before the save facility becomes active. It's actually more of a demo version of the real product, but you can use it as much as you like without being obliged to pay the fee; as such this PD version is more bannerware than shareware.

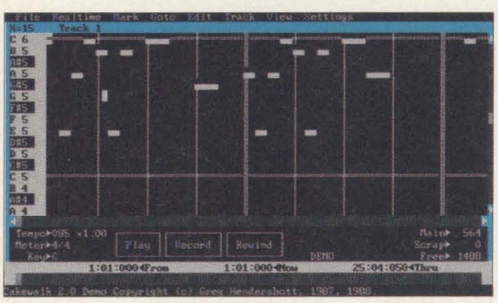
As far as specifications go, *CakeWalk* is very near the top, with provision for a healthy 256 tracks. Four screens are provided for events, measures, notes and tracks. Unfortunately, only one of these windows can be displayed on-screen at a time, leading to a lot of frantic mouse clicking as you need to change between the various screens.

The package is fully mouse-controlled should you have a rodent, or alternatively can be operated from the keyboard. The fact that only one method may be used at any one time can be annoying; menus are great but keyboard shortcuts do have their advantages.

The programmer was obviously influenced greatly by sequencers on the ST as all the dialogues have a GEMesque feel about them. This is a real advantage, as most music software tends to be on the ST, making migration that much easier. It also avoids the tendency of PC programmers to give each new program a totally different interface from the last. Further evidence of the programmer's thoughtfulness is the sheer flexibility of the package: the time format (amongst many other things) can be configured to appear in the same format as your old sequencer, for instance.

CakeWalk is a great package. It's a shame that the producers felt it necessary to cripple the program before release into the PD market, but at least you can fully test it before spending the cash.

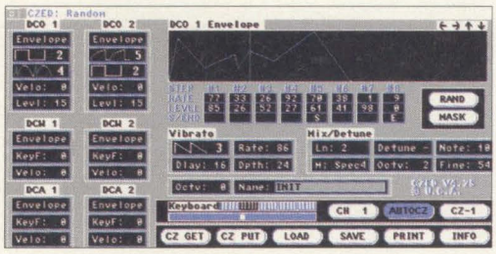
PC 77%



The almost-shareware *CakeWalk*. Enjoy the benefits of shareware without the dilemma of whether to register – you haven't got any choice if you want it to do anything useful!

CZ Utilities (Shareware)

Amiga • F323 • 512K • Registration fee: $30 (£18) • NBS, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QA ☎ 0983 529594



Got a Casio CZ synthesiser? Then what you need is *CZ-Ed*, an essential tool for creating some really great sounds

The Casio CZ-101 certainly seems to be the synth to own when it comes to Amiga PD. The *CZ Utilities* are a collection of programs to improve the usability of your CZ synth, and include a user-friendly sound editor, split simulator and bank loader together with some ready-programmed sounds and instruments.

CZ-Ed is the main program in the set and enables the easy editing of sounds uploaded from your synth. It is Intuition-based and can be controlled in the standard fashion – right mouse button to increase values, left to reduce them. The sound envelope is visible on-screen at all times but unfortunately cannot be heard without squirting it to the CZ: considering the Amiga's own sound capabilities, it would have been nice to be able to at least 'proof hear' the sound. Those with no creative talent whatsoever will find the 'random' gadget handy – just give it a click and see what *CZ-Ed* comes up with!

The remaining three utilities are all of the, 'how did I live without them?' variety. The split simulator, in particular, is very clever: just tell the program where to put the split and which instrument sound you want at each end of the keyboard and you're away! *CZ Load* could also be useful to download sounds created with *CZ-Ed* from within your sequencer.

All the utilities are well put together and are fairly easy to get to grips with. Unfortunately no documentation is supplied, save for the licence agreement and a very brief description. The author's excuse for this is that if you want the manual, you'll register the software: if you can't use the software are you likely to register?

AMIGA 75%

MIDI Utilities (PD)

Amiga • U302 • 512K • Strictly PD, 11 York Place, Hotwells, Bristol BS1 5UT

A real bumper crop of MIDI utilities here. Whether it be building your own MIDI interface, the odd bit of sequencing or even adding a few sounds to your CZ synth, this disk has something to offer all potential Amiga musicians:

- *MIDI Box* – When the Commodore boffins put such a great internal sound chip into the Amiga they probably didn't foresee the need to link up any external musical devices. But now synthesisers are all the rage and in order to use your Amiga as the nerve centre of a MIDI studio, you will need an interface. The contents of this drawer provide an IFF circuit diagram (for viewing in *Deluxe Paint* or similar) and a text file which give step by step instructions to wiring up your own serial MIDI interface. Soldering irons at the ready!
- *MIDI Utilities 2* – To say that there are no MIDI sequencers available for the Amiga in the public domain is not strictly true. *MU2* is a no-frills (which roughly translates to no features either, but who's complaining – it's free, right?) basic MIDI sequencer. Record the data from your synth, save it and play it back, that's about it! To be fair, the program also allows 'patches' to be downloaded to a CZ-101 synth, so could come in handy for all you CZ owners out there.
- *Panel* – Now this is a bit more like it. *Panel* provides a direct way to program your synthesiser. A user-friendly bank of sliders

cont. on p22

cont. from p21

Wot no interface? How to get wired for sound

Before you get your spanking brand new synthesiser home and the shareware or PD program you've ordered plops on to the doormat, you're going to need something to attach your computer to the keyboard. Whether it's a couple of standard MIDI cables as in the ST's case, or a full blown sound card for the PC, you need to splash out before you can plug in. Take *Public Domain*'s advice on the best buys around...

ST

ST owners are lucky enough to have MIDI interfaces built in to their machines. All they need is a pair of standard MIDI cables. These are available cheaply from any music store. Plug in and play away!

Amiga

Amiga owners have the option to build their own interface or buy a ready-built unit. The choice largely depends on your electronic skills. If you are unsure as to which way up the circuit diagram should be, pay the £20 and forget it – it's just not worth the hassle.

Evesham Micros produces a good MIDI interface at a wallet-friendly £19.95 price point. Evesham is on (0386) 765500.

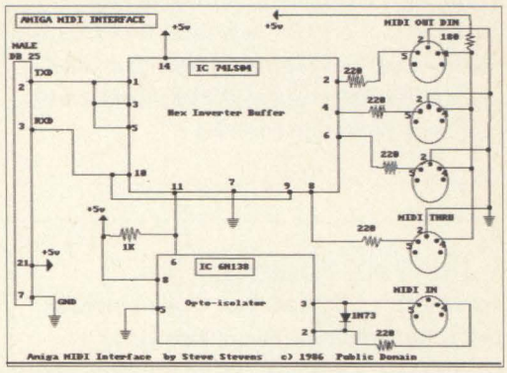
PC

The story for PC owners is not quite as cosy. The interfaces are available but tend to be quite expensive, owing to the fact that many are housed on sound cards. Several options are available but a safe bet is Sound Blaster Professional which retails at around £199. Not only does the card include excellent internal sound capabilities (22 Voice) but comes with a MIDI interface and sequencer. Contact Special Reserve (0279) 600204.

control the action and effects such as attack and sustain can be easily adjusted. The program is fully multi-tasking, so can be run alongside any other MIDI software you might have in memory at the time.

● *CZ Instruments & Music* – A collection of sounds and music for the Casio CZ-101 including all the old favourites: electric guitars, pianos, harpsichords – you name it!

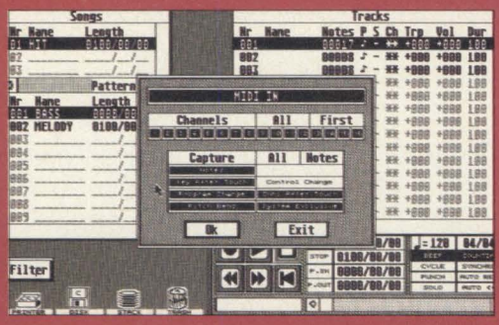
AMIGA 70%



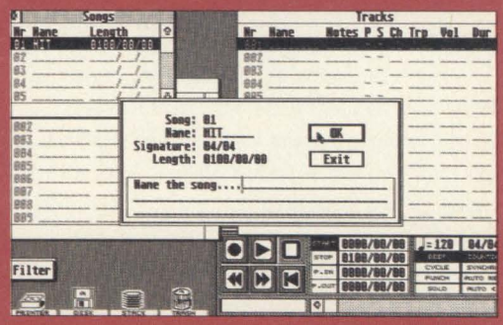
MIDI Box – the complete guide to building your own MIDI interface. Who knows? If you've got good enough eyesight, you might not have to buy the disk at all!

Going for Gold – Mastering Alchimie Junior ● Going for Gold – M

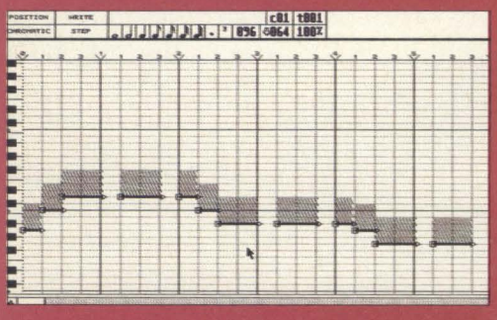
1 Your mission: to create a short, multi-tracked tune and to learn a little about the workings of a sequencer. *Alchimie Junior* is being used for this walk-through. However, most sequencers work on similar principles, so pay attention PC and Amiga owners new to the world of MIDI music



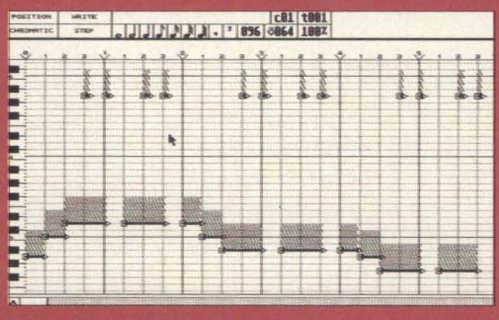
2 First of all set up the sequencer to suit your needs. This is accomplished by adjusting the MIDI IN & MIDI OUT options. You might like, for example, to instruct the sequencer to ignore all changes in instrument (program changes) or only receive information from certain channels



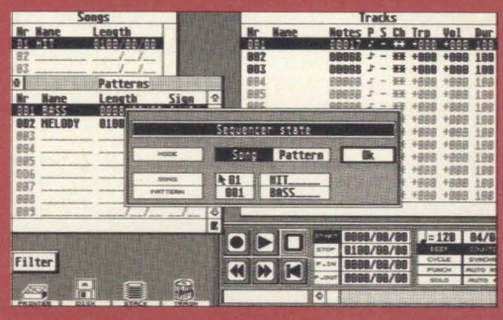
3 Before you can start, *Alchimie* requires you to either load a song or name a new song. As you will be creating your own song it's the latter you want to do, so fill in a name (How about *Experiment IV* for all you Kate Bush fans?) and give the your tune a time signature and length



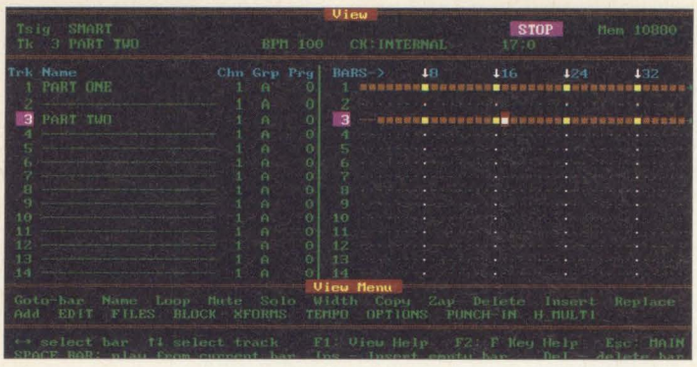
7 ...Grid Edit. Grid editing gives you greater control over end results than quantisation, but can be quite time-consuming for major alterations. Basically you can alter the values for each note individually. This sort of thing is for the perfectionist with a more than a smidgen MIDI knowledge, really



8 To beef up the bass-line, add some percussion (closed cymbal, or a hi-hat will do at a push). This is an ideal job for the Step Editing feature. Click on the Step button, press the space bar to advance the required number of blank notes and put the cymbals in place using your synth. Repeat as required



9 To add your newly-created funky bass-line to the current song, or to make it the first track of the song to be laid down, you need to switch from Pattern mode to the Song mode. To do this double-click on the Play button and select Song. This is where the various layers of the song are pieced together



Flexible mouse control, a sprinkling of logic and new colour scheme – these are just a few of the features that need to be added to *Voyetra* to make it worthwhile!

Voyetra Sequencer Plus III Version 2 Demo (Bannerware)

PC • MPC4 • 1Mb recommended • Softville, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Elettra Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XN

Voyetra is a commercial package with a fully-working demo available in the public domain – the main drawback is that it has no Save function. "Why review a demo without the save function?", I hear you cry. Well, most synths have a 'record' button, so how about using the sequencer to meddle with the music and handle the multiple tracks, while using your synth to take the final recording? Interested? Then read on...

How many PC owners don't own a mouse these days? Too many for producers of this package, obviously. *Voyetra* insists on sticking to the pre-eighties text selection system using cursor keys and all the time-consuming frustration that entails.

64 tracks are provided for recording, which is average, but not gargantuan. This alone is not likely to restrict any music you produce – most records are produced using less than 16 tracks. A combination of the text control system and the limited number of tracks however, may do something to sway your decision.

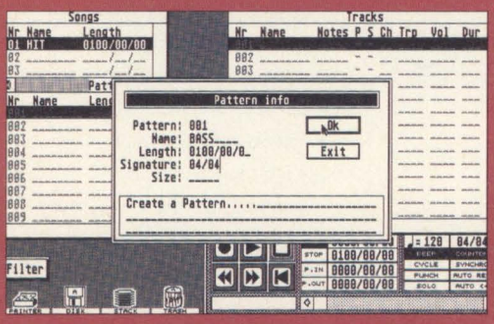
Fortunately there are some redeeming features, probably the best of which is the instrument librarian. Simply press X and you are presented with a bank of spaces into which up to 32 pre-defined instruments can be loaded: from Akai to Korg to Yamaha, they're all here, stored on disk.

In a break from the norm *Voyetra* allows up to two windows on screen at a time (true, this might not sound a lot to an ST or Amiga owner but for a PC program this side of Windows, it's pretty darned impressive!) So, for example, note editing can be carried out while still viewing the track display. The note editor is also exceptionally well-designed; just move using the cursor keys and press Insert to add a note.

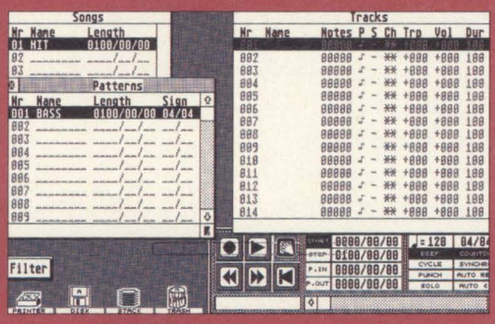
Quibbles aside, the program is certainly powerful but whether anyone could cope with the program using the PC's keyboard alone, has to be questioned – hopefully a later release will resolve this irritating problem. If you don't have a mouse, if you long for the instrument library or if you are just plain anti-GUI then *Voyetra* could be worth checking out.

PC **60%**

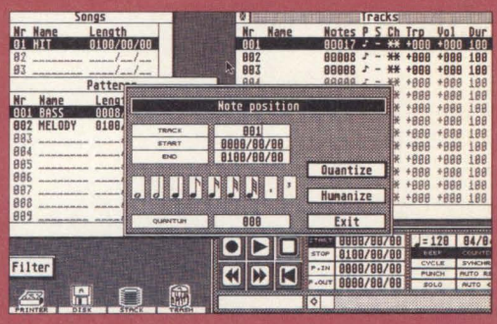
ing Alchimie Junior ● Going for Gold – Mastering Alchimie Junior



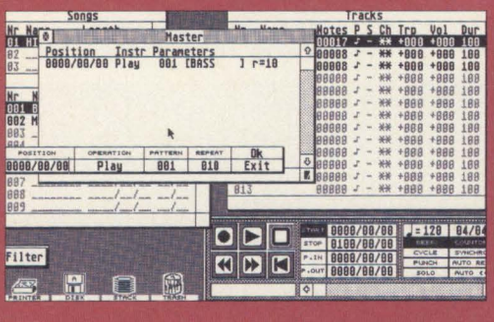
4 Next come the building blocks for the song – the patterns (or tracks) which you record one at a time. Once again, you'll have to specify a length, which can be a bit difficult to judge at this stage. Don't worry, just over-estimate for the moment; the length can always be adjusted later



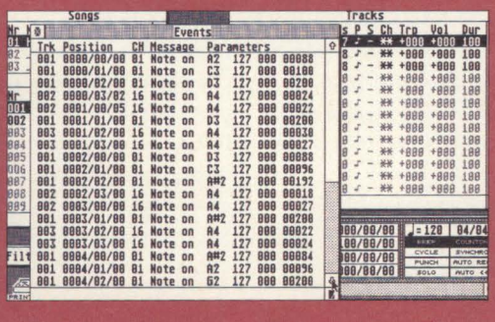
5 Time to start recording. First, tell *Alchimie* on which pattern you intend to record; simply drag the desired pattern to the Stop button. Press Play and Record and the sequencer will copy everything you play (on whatever MIDI instrument you have linked to your computer) into the input buffer



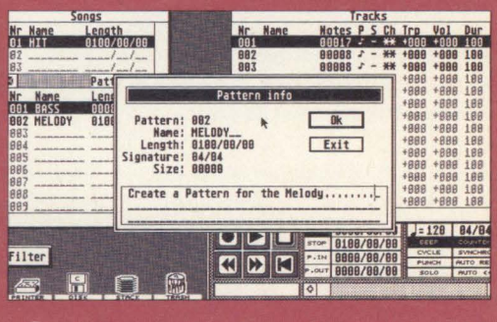
6 If you are happy with the piece you have played, drag the input buffer to track one – your music is now part of the 'bass' pattern. The chances are, the bass isn't quite in time. You have two choices; either quantise (ie, let the computer put everything in time automatically), or...



10 Now summon the Master window to position your bass pattern in the song. Insert a Play pattern by clicking the mouse button and selecting from the resulting menu. In this case the pattern has been given ten repeats – your bass will now play along when you record the next pattern



11 So far only a simple bass-line (with a small amount of percussion) has been laid down. But just look at all those MIDI events that have been recorded into the program already – aren't you glad we've got sequencers to make life for the MIDI musician a whole lot easier?



12 It just remains for you to add the melody, in the same way in which we created the bass, only this time you'll be able to hear the bass-line being played back. Or alternatively, you can play it live using the bass-line as a backing track (after all, you'll want to have something to do on *Top of the Pops*)

Programming & Utilities

From disks to directories, from art to anims, from copying to comms... it's all here. Tim Howell looks at the latest software tools to make the life of the programmer, novice or old hand, that much easier...

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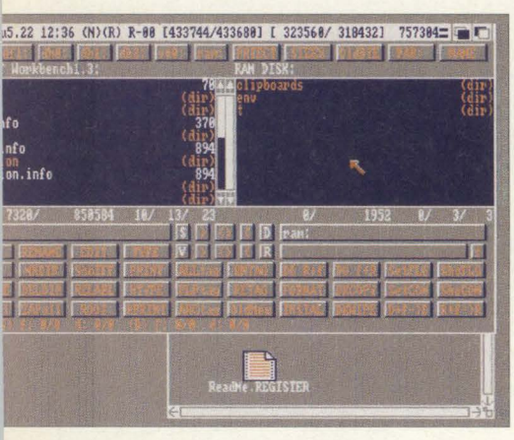
M2Du 5.22 (Shareware)

Amiga • 512K • Registration fee: discretionary • Scope Disk 128 • Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, Co Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091-587 1195

What would this reviews section be like without a look at an Amiga file copying utility? About the half the size, probably. Given such an introduction, it won't surprise you that *M2Du* is one such program.



Another front-end for the Amiga, *M2Du* takes on the impressive *SID* as the premier file utility

It follows in the footsteps of some pretty capable utilities, particularly *SID* (which earned a rating of 92 per cent in *Public Domain* Issue 1) – a tough task for any program. Unfortunately *M2Du* doesn't quite pull it off. Sure, it's got all of the usual disk-related functions to enable you to copy, delete and view files and, really, if that's all you want then the program does a reasonable enough job with the minimum of fuss.

A major function is the program's ability to run other programs from its main window; strings of command lines can be entered to set-up different conditions when these programs are run. Setting them up to work properly requires a bit of effort, but the instructions that come with the program, though fairly detailed, should be helpful to any programming novices.

There are a couple of other features worth mentioning, such as the program's built-in ability to view IFF graphic files, and its variety of delete-related options that will remove everything from individual files to whole disks, but these are more-or-less standard on these types of tools. The cost of the shareware registration varies depending on how much you pay and what you want out of it. If you pay less than $20 (£12), that's just a contribution to the author. $20-$25 gets you a disk with the latest version of the program plus some utilities. And if you pay $25 or more you'll get the latest version, the utilities and the next two upgrades free. Simple, huh?

Overall *M2Du* offers some alternative features to the other CLI-replacements available, but its complicated options and general lack of any real innovation means it is overshadowed by its main rival, the excellent *SID*.

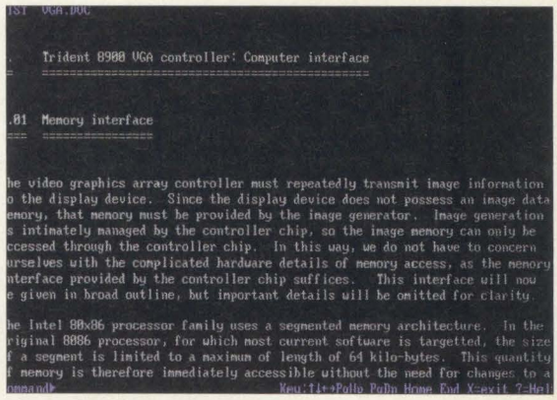
AMIGA 72%

VGA Technical Reference Manual (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk 1138 • Registration: £4-£16 • Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun CF7 9PZ ☎ 0443 238630

Computer manuals are usually pretty hefty tomes. They tend to make telephone directories look like the the Beano, except that they're usually less interesting to read than the Outer Hebrides edition of the Yellow Pages.

VGA Technical Reference Manual gets around all that – it's a 200K text file that contains all sorts of information on the VGA graphics standard as well as explaining what PCs are all about.


Trident 8900 VGA controller: Computer interface
.01 Memory interface
he video graphics array controller must repeatedly transmit image information
o the display device. Since the display device does not possess an image data
emory, that memory must be provided by the image generator. Image generation
s intimately managed by the controller chip, so the image memory can only be
ccessed through the controller chip. In this way, we do not have to concern
urselves with the complicated hardware details of memory access, as the memory
nterface provided by the controller chip suffices. This interface will now
e given in broad outline, but important details will be omitted for clarity.
he Intel 80x86 processor family uses a segmented memory architecture. In the
riginal 8086 processor, for which most current software is targetted, the size
f a segment is limited to a maximum of length of 64 kilo-bytes. This quantity
f memory is therefore immediately accessible without the need for changes to a

A lot of useful information is packed into the *VGA Technical Reference Manual*, from the basics right up to some in-depth quite technical stuff

There are no accompanying programs to make reading this enormous file any easier or friendlier, which, if you have to use the standard DOS Type command, could make things a bit cumbersome.

That said, the manual is really only meant to be printed out. This could be a bit awkward for those users without a printer, but it does make sense and is an inexpensive way of getting a lot of information that would normally be found in a book costing at least four times as much.

More important than all this is the content of the information contained in the document. It seems to be very well organised into chapters and appendices, and the technical level of

the information, although quite in-depth in places, is explained from the simplest level and becomes progressively more technical as you carry on through.

There are several levels for registering the *VGA Technical Reference Manual*, ranging from £4 to £16 depending on how useful you find it. At most you'll be entitled to make further print-outs of the file, as there are no upgrades available.

If you're looking for some information explaining what the VGA standard and the PC is all about, but don't want to go to the extent of spending heaps of dosh on a book that'll probably be too complicated anyway, then *VGA Technical Reference Manual* is worth a thumb-through.

PC 64%

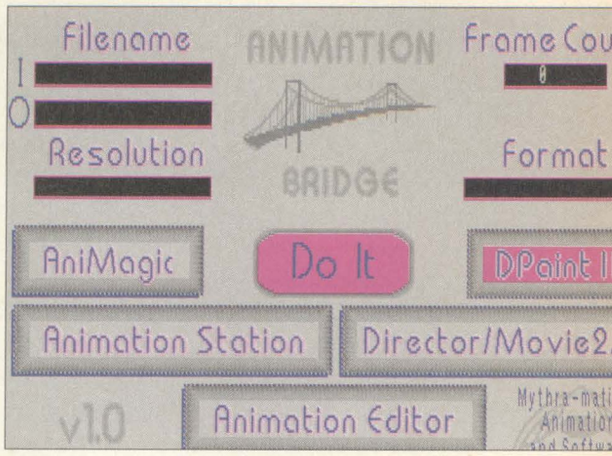
AnimBridge (Shareware)

Amiga • 512K • Plus compatible • Disk 1221 • Registration fee: $20 • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

The Amiga is the ideal computer when it comes to animation. Its hardware is of a high enough standard that it is even used by professional film and television companies to create stunning graphical sequences.

There is a huge range of animation packages available for the Amiga, but while they all produce results that conform to the IFF standard (called ANIM-5 or ANIM OPT 5), there are distinct variations between software which mean that animations created with one package can't always be used on another.

AnimBridge has been created to enable you to swap animation files between a variety 3-D rendering, paint, animation and special effects packages. These are: *AniMagic*, *Animation Station*, *Animation Editor*, *Director/Movie 2.0* and (which will be of use to most Amiga owners) *Deluxe Paint III*.



***AnimBridge* provides a friendly and easy way of swapping animations between a number of paint and animation packages**

Operating the program is easy – if you're at all familiar with the Amiga's front-end you'll be right at home. When run, *AnimBridge* presents a screen full of options, including the source device of the animation file, screen width, height and depth, the number of frames in the animation, and so on. To get it going, select an animation,

cont. on p26

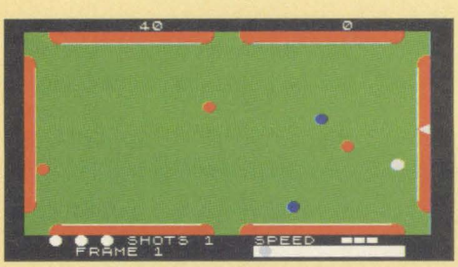
Nostalgic for the heyday of Sinclair computing? Relive them on your ST

ZX Spectrum Emulator (PD)

ST • 1Mb • Riverdene PDL 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

This one slipped into the office just after we ran our emulators feature a couple of issues back. It provides an easy way of using programs written for the venerable Sinclair machine on an ST.

Getting the emulator up and running is relatively easy, which is fortunate as the documentation that comes with the program is in German. The ST's keys are used in the familiar Sinclair style – a single key-press is all that's needed to input commands. For example, to get a program to load with the emulator, instead of typing L-O-A-D letter by letter, you just hit the letter J. Why it's J I haven't a clue...



One of the programs that comes with the *ZX Spectrum Emulator* is *Pool*, a slow but playable game

Once you've familiarised yourself with these strange keyboard shortcuts then the rest is easy. And if you are stumped at any stage then you can hit the Help key to bring up a display of the way the Speccy's keys are interpreted on the ST keyboard.

There are two sample programs provided on the disk – a game of pool and the tutorial program that was supplied with the ZX Spectrum Plus computer. While these are both relatively slow, they are perfectly usable.

The full Sinclair Basic interpreter is supported and if you want you can spend hours inputting hundreds of lines of Spectrum programs of the sort that used to get printed in unreadable type in ancient computer magazines.

As far as loading 'real' Speccy software – the *Knight Lores* and *Jet Set Willys* of this world – then you may have problems. We tried loading some of the programs that worked with the *Spectrum Emulator* on the Amiga, but none of them worked. Whether there is a way of loading original Spectrum games in, I don't know. The documentation that comes with the program gives the impression of being quite detailed, but it's written in German so none of us could understand it. Perhaps by now someone will have written some English docs for it?

You need 1Mb to run the program, and it's not worthwhile buying the extra chips just for that purpose – you can probably pick up a second-hand Spectrum for the same price.

But if you want to at least reminisce about the early days of home computing, or just boggle the minds of your peers with your ST's skills at mimicry, then the *ZX Spectrum Emulator* is the disk to wham in your drive.

ST 79%

ZX-81 Emulator (PD)

ST • 512K • UTI-140 • ST Club, 2 Broadway, Nottingham NG1 1LX ☎ 0602 410241

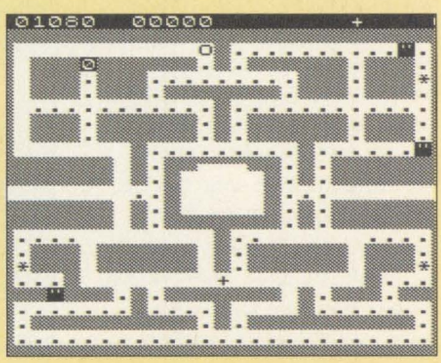
Before the days of the colour Spectrum, Sinclair was famous for its popular black and white computer, the ZX-81. And guess what? The ST can do a pretty mean impression of this archaic bunch of bytes too.

While the ZX-81's 1K of memory and black and white display look extremely dated in these days of mega-memory and thousands of on-screen colours, it played a major part in the history of computing, being a low-cost, simple to understand introduction to computing.

Like the *ZX Spectrum Emulator*, the *ZX-81 Emulator* copies the eccentricities of the Sinclair way of mapping the keyboard, with commands accessed from a single key-press. The keys are mapped slightly differently to the other emulator, and there isn't a help page to call up if you get lost, but once you've worked out which key does what, you're ready to roll. The *ZX-81 Emulator* comes with an assortment of programs and they work pretty well. They range from games to oddities such as a biorhythms calculator and an assembler. All of the programs would have required a 16K ZX-81 to run rather than the basic 1K model. While they are by no means advanced in terms of the ST's capabilities, some of them are quite usable and entertaining. *Pacman*, especially, is smooth, pretty nippy and very addictive.

As far as compatibility is concerned, we weren't able to try any 'real' ZX-81 programs as there appears to be no way to transfer them across to the emulator. But the 39 programs provided on the disk should provide enough material for a few hours of engrossing computing (and is it my imagination or do the programs on the disk actually run faster than they did on the ZX-81?)

ST 81%



Yes, this is a ZX-81 version of *Pacman* running on the ST's *ZX-81 Emulator*. And yes, it plays well too!

cont. from p25

choose an output format, click on the Do It icon and that's it.

When used with animations created with *Deluxe Paint III*, *AnimBridge* strips off redundant data from the files which saves a lot of disk space. The program also multi-tasks which means that if your computer has enough memory, you could run *AnimBridge* and an animation package at once.

Registration for *AnimBridge* will set you back $20 (about £12) which will secure you a version of the program that doesn't remind you to register all the time. This is a pittance considering how much time and effort the program will save you.

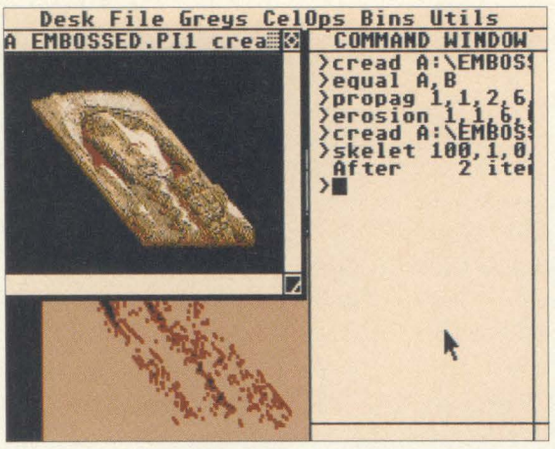
AMIGA 83%

Atari Image Manager (PD)

ST • 512K (1Mb recommended) • Disk 339 • Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB ☎ 0634 723659

Atari Image Manager has been designed for those people who want to subject their images to weird and wonderful graphical transformations.

The program can handle *Degas* and *Neochrome* pictures. The images are loaded into one of four individual windows within the program, and from there they can be changed and customised to your requirements. The images can be pulled, stretched and similarly transformed using a wide range of complex mathematical options. The resulting image appears in one of the other windows. There is also a command line window on the screen in which the program's settings can be controlled from the keyboard, rather than from the traditional pull-down menus. The window also lets you see the commands that you have inputted, including previous ones, which keeps you informed of what's going on and what has gone on.



Subject all your ST images to weird and wonderful transformations using *Atari Image Manager*, a powerful graphics manipulation utility

Occasionally it is difficult to understand why some functions do

Sine waves, rasters and text messages made simple for the lazy demo writer

Shadow Utility Disk (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Disk 1530 • 17-Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

This is a collection of three useful utilities by an Amiga group called Shadow. The three tools, *Raster Blaster II*, *Simple Sinus* and *Text Writer*, have all been designed for help programmers with the creation of demos.

Using the programs requires only a limited amount of technical knowledge; however to use the data that the programs produce you'd have to have some idea of what to do with it, plus the programs to make use of it.

These three programs are all useful tools for prospective, and current, demo writers. *Raster Blaster II* and *Simple Sinus* are both competent and usable programs, and while *Text Writer* is admittedly primitive, if all you want it for is to write scrolly messages then it does the job.

The *Shadow Utility Disk* is quite a comprehensive package which should have something to offer most demo writers who want to cut down on coding time. Here's a round-up of what each program has to offer:

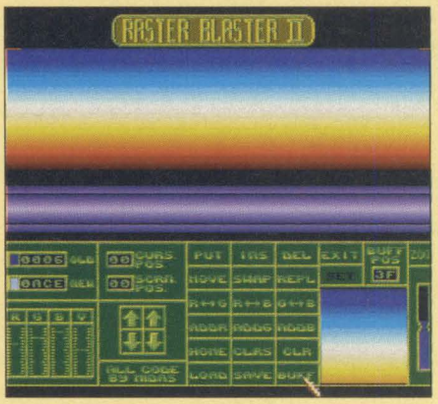
Raster Blaster II

This tool's purpose is to help you design the coloured raster lines often seen in demos. You know the type of thing: coloured bars or backgrounds that fade and merge gradually from one colour to another.

Raster Blaster II makes generating these colours, and the shades in-between, straightforward. Each horizontal pixel line of the bar is edited individually, with the user setting the Red, Green and Blue (or RGB) levels to adjust the colours in increments. For more detailed editing a certain number of lines can be stored in a buffer to be edited in more detail.

Once you've got the raster colours you want, you can save the data to a disk and the file can be saved as raw data, or as Seka data which can be used by the *Seka* assembler.

AMIGA 82%



Very attractive to look at, *Raster Blaster II* has been designed to help you create colourful copper bars

Simple Sinus

While most Amiga demos make more use of bobs, or blitter objects, than they do sprites (because the Amiga has only eight hardware sprites whereas it can have over a thousand bobs), this program lets you design the paths that sprites should follow.

***Simple Sinus* lets you create different paths for sprites that you use in your programs**

Simple Sinus lets you edit all sorts of different variables to determine how the sprites should move including their speed along the X and Y axes, the distance between the sprites and the direction in which they should move. You can't actually edit the sprites themselves in this program, only their movements.

All the different variables are edited simply by pointing the cursor at the item you want to change, and then moving the mouse to increase or decrease the value.

Once you've got the movements sorted out, you can then save them to disk in a form that can then be loaded into the *Seka* assembler and used, along with a source file that's included on the disk, in your own programs.

AMIGA 67%

Text Writer

Of the three programs, *Text Writer* is the most primitive. It has been designed for writing the text you get in those infamous scrolly messages ("Thanks to John, Pete and the Hairy Horsefly for putting up with my collection of trained fleas while I wrote this demo!" – that sort of thing).

As a text editor the program falls flat on its face. There aren't any cut and paste commands to help with editing your text, nor is there word-wrap which means that everything looks a bit messy on-screen. Mind you, *Text Writer* hasn't been designed to be the latest thing in word processors, and as a basic, albeit primitive, text editor to be used for writing continuous scrolly messages, it does the job.

AMIGA 43%

***Test Writer*'s purpose is to provide a simple way of entering text for scrolling messages**

Q. I'm having problems getting my DTP software to layout the VIDEO grabs I touched up in my GRAPHICS package from the MIDI application I've been PROGRAMMING in C. Do I need more MEMORY, should I be looking at other HARD DRIVES and PRINTERS or should I just plug myself into the mains?

A. No problem, just UPGRADE your magazine.

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what they do, but all is explained in the documentation and the tutorial files that come with the program. Given the complex nature of some of these commands, it is difficult to see their results clearly on a low resolution display. *AIM* can work in both low and high resolution modes (but not medium) so on the more detailed screen the results could be clearer, although in black and white.

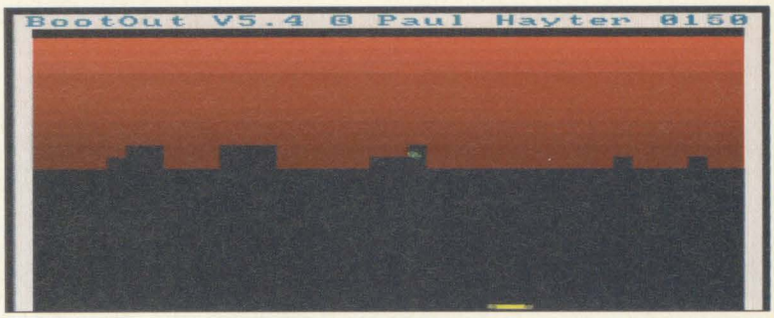
Hardly an earthshattering bunch of bytes, *Atari Image Manager* is nevertheless competent enough at what it does.

ST 68%

Bootgames (PD)

Amiga • 512K, 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH
☎ 0924 366982

Bootblocks are funny little things. This minuscule amount of memory – a mere 1,024 bytes – that the computer looks at first when you bung a disk into its drive usually contains little more than a loader to automatically boot the main program on the disk. But it has been used in many different ways in the past – we're all familiar with the scrolling messages, virus checkers and menus that pop up as soon as you wham a disk in the drive.



Thanks to *Bootgames* you can store an entire game of *Breakout* in the tiny 1,024 bytes provided by the bootblocks in your disks. There's also a simple game of squash included as well

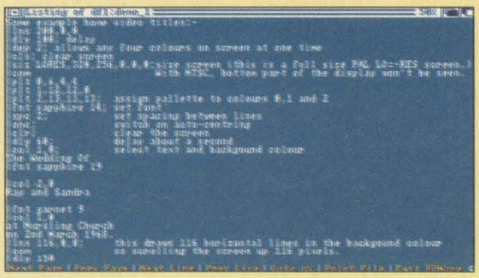
Who would have believed then, given the simplicity of the tiny programs that have been contained in the bootblock in the past, that a game would fit in there? Yes, that's right – *Bootgames* enables you to set-up your

Giving credit where it's due – putting titles on your home video productions

AmNuts Video Viewer (Licenceware)

Amiga • 512K • Disk 1199 • £8 • AmigaNuts United, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX

With camcorders rapidly becoming a common household appliance, the days of the home video producer are with us. But while some of the on-screen antics of the home videos may vary in quality, how about adding the professional touch with some scrolling credits explaining who did what, when, where and how?



Using commands entered with the help of a text editor, you can use *AmNuts Video Viewer* to create video titles

AmNuts Video Viewer is an updated version of the older shareware program *sMOVIE*, but improved to make it more usable for video applications. It enables you to view text files as special scrolling messages, which move up the screen just like they do in the movies. The text can also be subjected to various effects; being moved around the screen, fading in and out etc.

You can also generate hard copy from the program. If you have a printer connected, pressing P will print out the page that is currently on-screen, while pressing S will print out the entire file.

One space-saving advantage for those of you who use the *PowerPacker* compacting utility (available in both a shareware version and a more advanced commercial product) is that *AmNuts* will also display documents that have been crunched with this program, which means you can save more documents on a disk.

The program uses standard Amiga fonts, like those in the fonts directory on the Workbench disk. Some will not suit being blown up large on a television screen or monitor, but extra fonts can be obtained on PD disks.

To produce your own scrolling credits you first have to create a text file. In this file you enter both the text you want to display on-screen as well as all the control commands to tell the program how to display it; these include centring the text, setting its height, what colour it should be and so on.

In spite of its flexibility, the fact that the information has to be entered in a separate program is a bit of cumbersome system, requiring you to swap between the text editor and *AmNuts* itself.

If you want to use these files in your own videos, there are a couple of ways to go about it. You could feed the signal from your Amiga through an RGB modulator and into the video recorder. In this case you would not be able to overlay the text on top of a prerecorded video image – you would just have the text on a plain background. They could still add an extra dimension to your holiday videos, though.

If, however, you want to go all out and create a professional-looking video, you could look at buying a genlock device (that mixes two video images together, priced from about £100 upwards) and then overlay the scrolling credits on your video images. This is a lot more pricey, but it would get better results.

AmNuts Video Viewer is a competent program, but if you want to use it to its full ability and you'd probably need to invest in a genlock. At a price of £8, this licenceware package could be worth a look – it is a lot cheaper than the commercial programs around that do a similar job.

AMIGA 72%

Video Master (Licenceware)

ST • 512K • Disk 1739 • £3.95 • South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD

Another licenceware release, *Video Master* is similar to *AmNuts Video Viewer* on the Amiga, but much more advanced, offering a number of additional functions that not only add effects to the text, but make the program easier to use.

Video Master not only enables you to scroll text up the screen, but also pictures as well. These pictures can be in any of the main image standards – *Neochrome*, *Degas* or *Art Director* – which means that most people should be able to draw something they can use in the program.

The text you want to place on to your video can be written directly into the program as opposed to having to create a text file as with the Amiga program. You can view the scrolling titles at any stage of the proceedings, returning to the main menu at the press of a key to continue your editing.

Video Master comes with a variety of fonts which can be stretched to double height for a bit of variety. Once you've entered your titles, you can add a variety of effects to them. *Video Master* has a selection of 80 different screen wipes to choose from, which can make both the words and pictures fade in and out of the screen.

As well as being used to provide the titles for videos, *Video Master* could also be used in shops for presentations. The program's ability to handle both words and pictures lends itself to advertising purposes, and the production can be looped to provide a continuous onslaught of advertising messages.

Video Master's numerous functions and ease of use make it suitable for any ST user looking for a program to add that professional touch to their home video productions. This is one instance where paying the extra cost for a licenceware program is well worth it.

ST 84%

Text and pictures can be used together in *Video Master* to create title sequences for your home videos

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disks so that as soon as you put them in your computer you're able to play a game. Not only that – you've got two different games from which to choose.

The first is a simple *Breakout* game in which you have to knock bricks out of a wall. The other is a version of squash in which you have to keep hitting a ball around the white walls of the 'court'. Each time you hit the ball you get a point, and after every five points the ball speeds up.

Both games keep track of your score and the number of lives you have – quite impressive in this small amount of memory.

Neither is particularly astounding or engrossing, but from a technical point of view it is a thrill to have a game pop up instantaneously, plus it's impressive that a game can fit into such a minute amount of memory. There's an installation program included on the disk which does all the work of placing the games on your own disks. All you have to do is specify which game you want.

The only problem with the program is the bootblocks that *Bootgames* produces are not compatible with the A500 Plus. The 500 Plus often has problems reading custom bootblocks such as these, and some tricky programming methods must have been used to fit a game into such a small amount of memory; we all know by now that the A500 Plus doesn't like it when programmers stray from the straight and narrow of Commodore's programming guidelines...

More of a novelty program than a serious utility, *Bootgames* at least proves what can be fitted into the tiny space of the bootblock and while the games aren't much to play, it is something a bit different...

AMIGA 53%

Picturehelp (Shareware)

Amiga • 1Mb • Disk 1255 • Registration fee: £10-20 •17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

The Amiga's graphical abilities are unsurpassed in comparison to its price, but, unfortunately, to achieve such impressive results some of the systems it uses are pretty complex. Even if you are used to the computer's numerous graphics modes, converting IFF images from one IFF format to another can be frustratingly difficult.

Picturehelp is designed to convert the Amiga's IFF images to other file formats. Unfortunately, while it's capable of converting images from some formats, it can't handle them all and often achieves inaccurate results.

The program enables you to convert images from one type to another according to their resolution and whether they are interlaced or not. This means that some images end up looking like corrupted versions of the original. Sometimes the program has problems handling the conversions and ends up crashing. This often happens when you are trying to zoom in on a part of a pixel or trying to load

From automatic phone diallers and fast file finders to instant boot-ups and deskto

Metz Utilities (Shareware)

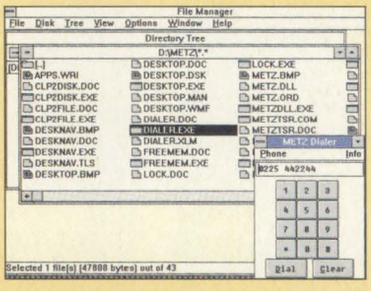
PC • Windows only • 2 Disks • Registration fee: various • SMS Shareware, 19 Carshalton Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4AQ ☎ 0276 681864

If you've read our Windows feature on page 51, you'll know that there are heaps of useful shareware utilities available for the PC's premier graphical user interface. The *Metz Utilities* is a two-disk collection of just some of these utilities. There are eight programs on the disks in all.

Each program is shareware and requires a registration fee to be paid if you use it frequently. When you pay the fee, which varies with each program, you receive a license number and you are able to upgrade to future releases of the tool. With all these programs packed on to two disks the package is well worth a look, although remember that you do need Windows to be able to run them. Here's a run-down of the goodies on offer:

Metz Dialer

Dialer is a small and simple program that dials the phone for you. It works is by sending Hayes control codes to a modem which, if you have a phone plugged into the back, will enable you to type in the number on your keyboard rather than on the phone itself. You'll still have to pick up the handset if you want to talk to anyone.



***Metz Dialer* sends commands to your modem so you can call your mates using your PC**

The shareware registration fee is $10, or about £6, which is a reasonable price to pay but it might be better to check out *Metz Phones*.

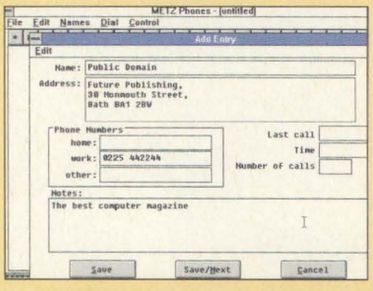
PC 58%

Metz Phones

This is basically a more advanced version of *Dialer* which not only enables you to dial numbers, but store them as well.

Phones has a built-in database list of US area codes and worldwide country codes, but you can build up your own comprehensive list of numbers. As in *Dialer*, these numbers are dialled through a Hayes-compatible modem, but for voice communications you'll have to plug a phone into the modem to be able to speak.

At $20, which is about £12, *Metz Phones* costs twice as much as *Dialer*, but then, it *is* more than twice as useful.



Not only can *Metz Phones* dial your phone, it can store your commonly-used numbers too

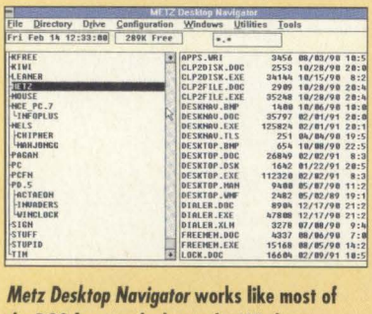
PC 72%

Metz Desktop Navigator

This is a complex file and disk-related program that operates in much the same way as the dozens of DOS replacement front-ends that are available; so it's perhaps an unusual program to have around considering that the point behind Windows is to be user-friendly in the first place.

The program displays the files on-screen in two columns – the directories displayed on the left of the screen, files on the right. It's easy to quickly change drives, directories and perform standard file operations by using the program, and in spite of the fact that Windows is pretty friendly anyway, it makes these operations far simpler to achieve. A couple of other handy features include a 12/24 hour clock and a memory display that displays the amount of DOS and EMS memory the computer has available.

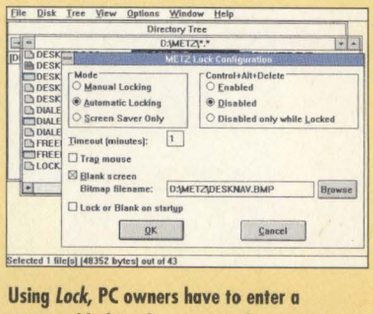
Desktop Navigator, for all its functions, only takes up a minuscule 30K of memory and for its $30 registration fee (or about £18) is well worth looking at.



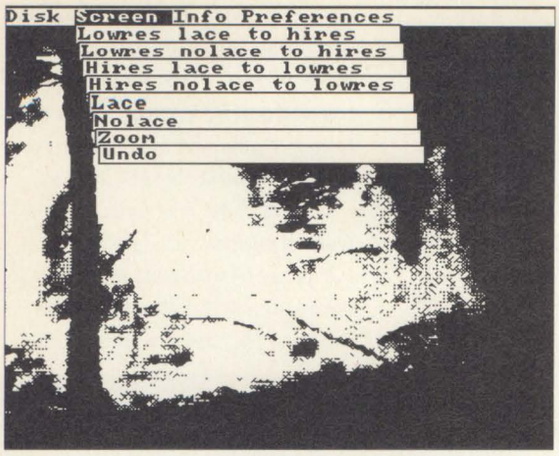
***Metz Desktop Navigator* works like most of the DOS front-ends, but under Windows**

Metz Lock

Another small and simple program, but one that could be more useful, is *Lock*. This lets you set a password system, so if you don't use your PC for



Using *Lock*, PC owners have to enter a password before they can use their computer



***Picturehelp* provides a straightforward way of converting IFF images from one style to another, using understandable menus**

a picture the program can't handle – up pops the infamous Amiga guru.

While the program does have its problems, it is useful in that you can zoom in on parts of an image, and can switch between lace and interlace modes easily. Mind you, these can be achieved with most paint packages.

If you register, £10 is regarded as a contribution, while £20 will secure you the next version of the program if you're in Europe (it'll set you back £25 if you live on any other continent).

Picturehelp doesn't really achieve what it sets out to do. It's occasionally unstable and its features aren't all that comprehensive. To rub salt into the wound, the functions it does have can be achieved with most paint packages, such as *Deluxe Paint*.

Not all that impressive...

AMIGA **42%**

Gemview (PD)

ST • 512K (1Mb recommended) • Disk 1647 • The South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD

There are dozens of different graphics standards around these days, many of which are not only particular to one computer, but to certain types of programs as well. *Gemview* is a program for the ST which enables you to view a wide range different image standards, and not just those created on the ST.

Here's a run-down of what standards the program can handle: GIF, Sun, STAD, IFF, GEM, *Neochrome*, *Art Director*, *Degas*, Tiny-Compressed, *Doodle*, Spectrum 512 and X Bitmap files created on anything from the Commodore 64 to Sun workstations.

Gemview can also convert any images that it can display to the IMG standard or incorporate them into a slideshow. Any displayed image can also be saved as a colour or monochrome image. On the disk itself there are three examples of images of different formats with which the user can experiment.

Gemview also lets you view the

cont. on p32

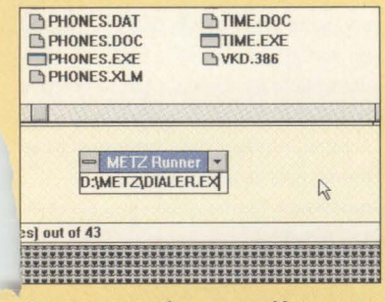
nagers – they're all simpler to run thanks to a compilation of Windows utilites

a set period of time, or if you lock it manually, you have to enter a password to be able to use it again. While the PC is locked out of action it displays either a black screen or a bitmap image on-screen, so it's basically a security-conscious screen saver.

Once you've set the program up you have to enter the password whenever you want to change anything, including the password, which makes it that extra bit secure.

Registration for *Lock* costs $10, or about £6, and if you're in need of an inexpensive way of making your PC secure, then this could be the program you need.

PC **66%**



***Metz Runner* provides a command line to type in commands from Windows**

Metz Runner

Runner is another simple program to describe: it displays a prompt and waits for you to type in the name of the program or application, which will then be run. It's a simple idea, but it can be handy if you want to run a program without sorting through heaps of windows, and means that you don't have to exit Windows to go back to a standard DOS prompt.

At only $10, or £6, I wonder whether *Runner*'s convenience is worth the outlay, but it really depends whether you feel you really need such a program. Try it out and see. After all, that's what shareware is all about.

PC **58%**

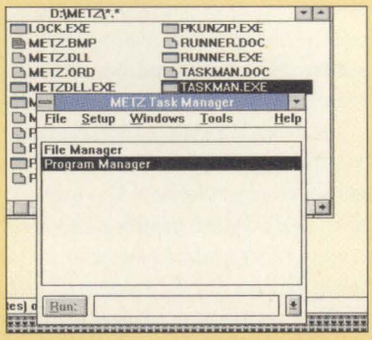
Metz Task Manager

Need to know what programs you've got running? Want to switch between them with ease? Then check out *Metz Task Master*, because that's exactly what it's designed to do.

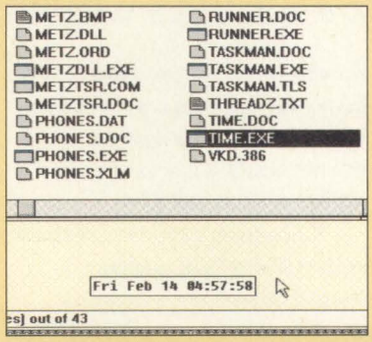
Even though Windows is a multi-tasking operating system, at least to a certain extent, *Task Master* makes it easy to see which programs are running and then lets you switch between them without having to search through different windows. You can also find out information on the amount of memory and disk space available, the versions of DOS and Windows you have and the type of video display adapter the PC has.

All very nice, but the $30 (or £18) registration fee is a bit steep.

PC **65%**



If you want to switch between Windows programs easily, look at *Metz Task Master*



Keep track of time by using *Metz Time*. This clock takes up hardly any space on the screen

Metz Time

Metz Time displays the time on-screen, and even, gosh, displays what the date is as well. There's not much more that can be said about it. Apart from, that is, that it's not worth the $10 (£6) registration fee, especially taking into account that the superior *Winclock*, which is on this month's cover disk, has a registration fee of $7.50 (about £4).

PC **32%**

Metz Desktop Manager

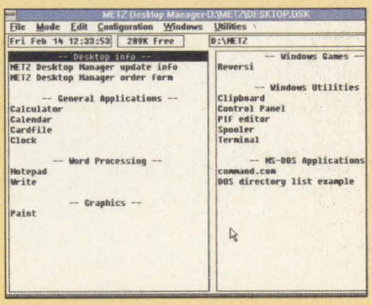
This program's main function, say the programmers, is to provide a menu system for Windows and non-Windows applications. Each menu can access up to 500 different items, which should give plenty of scope for even the largest of hard drives. When implemented, the menu can not only load the application, but can also call other data files or set conditions for the program at the same time.

There are a few other utilities built-in to *Desktop Manager* including:

- A screen saver, to prevent screen burn-in
- A file finder, to locate a particular file on your hard disk – useful if you have a big disk that's disorganised
- A system lock utility so your PC can't be used unless a password is entered

One of the more useful tools in this collection, but at $30 (or £18) it's another case of try before you buy (or register...)

PC **71%**



Even though Windows is easy to use, *Desktop Manager*'s menus make it even easier

This picture of Blondie is just one of the many images, this one a GIF image, that *Gemview* will let you look at on-screen. Not only can you view them, you can convert them to other file standards

nt. from
31

images you want to look at on a full-screen or just part of a screen – handy if you want to look at a picture in more detail. There is also an option to smooth the colour images so that they appear less pixelated on-screen.

As well as these different viewing options, there is also a variety of image manipulation commands which can do such things as brighten the image, dither it, or turn it into a half-tone picture. A zoom function can be adjusted according to both the X and Y axes to magnify any area you want.

You have to type in the name of the image you want to load, rather than choose it from a file selector menu. This can turn things into a long-winded process if you've got a lot of images you want to look at. Also, while the program runs in 512K, it would be safer to have more memory as some of the more complex graphics images will take up more space.

One good thing about the program is that when it's loading a picture it keeps you informed of what's going on; not only does it tell you that it is loading a file, it also informs you of what resolution the image is, the type of image format the file is and what it's doing to the image to convert it.

Gemview's ability to load and display such a wide range of image standards, plus the options it has for manipulating those images, makes it essential for anyone who meddles with ST graphics to any degree.

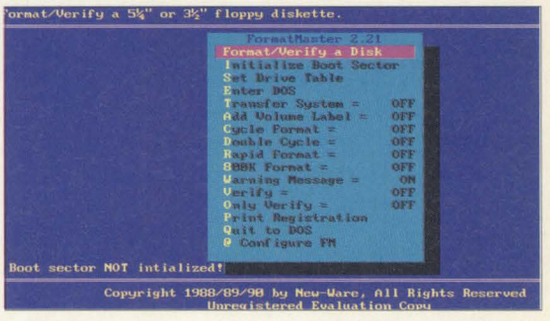
ST **79%**

FormatMaster (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk 2445 • Registration fee: $20 • PDSL, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, Sussex TN6 1UL ☎ 0892 663298

One of the most fundamental operations of computing – if not the most fundamental – is disk formatting.

In the case of the PC this isn't all that tricky: type in FORMAT and then the device and parameters in which you want to format the disk and away you go. But if you do a lot of formatting, or you're just too lazy to bother with typing in commands, then a dedicated formatting program could be the way to go.



***FormatMaster* enables you to format disks quickly and easily from its menu screen, which is clearly laid out and informative**

And that's what *FormatMaster* is. It has been designed to offer not only the standard formatting options, but it can also perform other, less common format-related, functions.

All the standard functions you'd expect to find are there. For a start you can format a disk normally. If you want to, you can initialise the boot sector of the disk separately, or set-up the program so that when a disk has been formatted you are prompted to enter the volume name of the disk.

Some of the program's more unusual abilities include a rapid format option which just re-initialises the bootblock, File Allocation Table (FAT) and the directory sectors of a disk. This wouldn't be as reliable as a normal format, but it could be handy if you've only got a few files on a recently-formatted disk and time is of the essence.

There is also an option to format a standard 360K 5.25-inch disk to 800K if you have a 1.2Mb disk drive. This would be useful if you want to save a bit of money on disks, but it wouldn't be wise to save valuable data to a disk formatted in this way as it isn't a standard operation. Also, other PC owners that don't have 1.2Mb drives wouldn't be able to read the 800K disks, whereas with the 360K disk it could be read by all 5.25-inch drives.

As well as these normal and not-so-normal commands, there are also a couple of other useful options. One is an ability to just verify a disk, that is not to actually format it but to check it to see if it's safe to save data to. Another interesting option is the cycle format option, which lets you repetitively format a series of disks in the same way.

FormatMaster comes in at a $20 (about £12) which gets you a registered copy of the program that has the opening shareware information message removed.

While *FormatMaster* is useful, it really depends on how many disks you format to determine whether you'll get much use or value out of the program.

PC **68%**

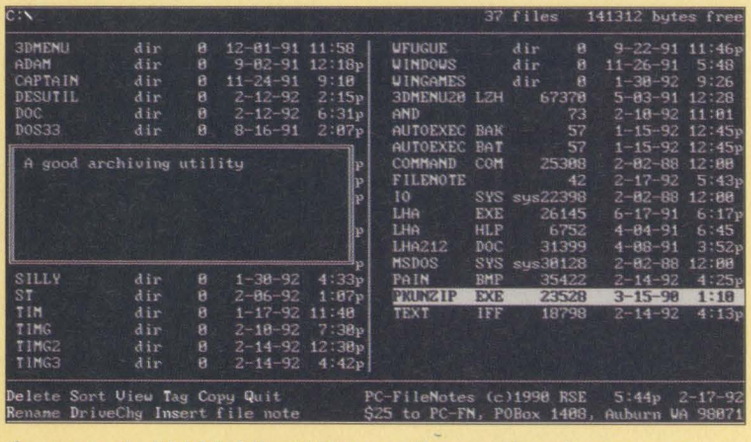
How to find out what a file does without loading it...

PC Filenotes (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk 2919 • Registration fee: £25 • PDSL, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, Sussex TN6 1UL ☎ 0892 663298

No matter how well you organise your PC's hard disk, when you look at the streams of filenames that are produced every time you do a directory it's often impossible to work out what a file actually does without loading it.

PC Filenotes has been designed to help you avoid this dilemma. It lets you attach descriptions to your files so that you can constantly remind yourself what the file does. Just load up *PC Filenotes*, highlight the program you want to attach the comment to, press Insert and type the description in. Easy.


C:\ 37 files 141312 bytes free
3DMENU dir 0 12-01-91 11:58
ADAM dir 0 9-02-91 12:18p
CAPTAIN dir 0 11-24-91 9:18
DESUTIL dir 0 2-12-92 2:15p
DOC dir 0 2-12-92 6:31p
DOS33 dir 0 8-16-91 2:07p
A good archiving utility
SILLY dir 0 1-30-92 4:33p
ST dir 0 2-06-92 1:07p
TIM dir 0 1-17-92 11:48
TIMG dir 0 2-10-92 7:30p
TIMG2 dir 0 2-14-92 12:30p
TIMG3 dir 0 2-14-92 4:42p
WFUGUE dir 0 9-22-91 11:46p
WINDOWS dir 0 11-26-91 5:48
WINGAMES dir 0 1-30-92 9:26
3DMENU20 LZH 67370 5-03-91 12:28
AND 73 2-10-92 11:01
AUTOEXEC BAK 57 1-15-92 12:45p
AUTOEXEC BAT 57 1-15-92 12:45p
COMMAND COM 25308 2-02-88 12:00
FILENOTE 42 2-17-92 5:43p
IO SYS sys22398 2-02-88 12:00
LHA EXE 26145 6-17-91 6:17p
LHA HLP 6752 4-04-91 6:45
LHA212 DOC 31399 4-08-91 3:52p
MSDOS SYS sys30128 2-02-88 12:00
PAIN BMP 35422 2-14-92 4:25p
PKUNZIP EXE 23528 3-15-90 1:10
TEXT IFF 18798 2-14-92 4:13p
Delete Sort View Tag Copy Quit
Rename DriveChg Insert file note
PC-FileNotes (c)1990 RSE 5:44p 2-17-92
$25 to PC-FN, POBox 1408, Auburn WA 98071

If you've got a hard disk full of files, *PC Filenotes* enables you to give each one a message to remind you what each file actually does. Handy if you find you tend to lose track

The program comes in two flavours – a TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident) version that stays in memory and is accessed at the press of a combination of keys, and a normally-loaded one if you can't spare the memory (which is about 27K).

Not only can *PC Filenotes* produce and recall these descriptions, it can also perform a number of other file management functions such as sorting, deleting, viewing and renaming files, always useful utilities to have around.

It's an easy to use program that's handy to have around, especially if you have a crowded hard disk. At a registration fee of $25 I reckon that it's a tad overpriced, especially as there are no incentives such as extra documentation or features, but if you think that it could be of some use to you then it's not overly-excessive.

PC **64%**

AMIGA PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARY

AMIGA DEMOS

Some people love them, some people cannot see the point of them, but they are here to stay!
There is no better way to show off your Amiga!

D 001 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO 4 (3 DISKS) Brilliant! One of the biggest.
D 008 STATIC BYTES MEGADEMO Six parts, clever stuff.
D 014 CRYPTOBURNERS MEGADEMO 2 Contains some good demos. worth a look.
D 033 TOMSOFT TRIP TO MARS. Vector graphics with a theme *
D 034 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) A classic! Not to be missed but beware of the very risque cartoons.
D 035 CRIONICS MEGADEMO Another great! Famous for the Madonna part.
D 061 POSSESSED MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Good animated space intro
D 067 MIRAGE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Yet another good one. Some good FX.
D 078 CRIONICS NEVERWARE (1 MEG) Famed for the brill Madonna graphic.
D 080 KATHARIS MEGADEMO From Poland! Famous X-Copy demo, plus.
D 081 INTUITION MEGADEMO Includes the flashiest ever aciid demo.
D 091 FILLET THE FISH Similar to PUGGS, but not as good, still brill.
D 125 DEXION MEGADEMO Underrated at the time. Old but good
D 135 REBELS MEGADEMO Excellent for its time. Good demos.
D 136 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO Again underrated at the time but very good.
D 138 RAF MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Still fresh after all this time!
D 141 PHENOMENA MEGADEMO Brilliant group today, always been good.
D 146 RSI MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) An all time great! Still good today! Great music and graphics. A must!!
D 150 IAN & MICK MEGADEMO Inc. classic toilet door demo.
D 153 PUGGS IN SPACE Not generally classed as a megademo, but not to be missed. Great for the kids.
D 160 TRILOGY MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Includes game, a classic, contains a joke, or is it a bug? You decide.
D 161 PREDATORS MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Don't miss this one, great sound, graphics and game. Another classic.
D 166 SILENTS MEGADEMO Early Silents, the brilliance is born!
D 180 SCOOPEX MENTAL HANGOVER Another classic which pushed the boundaries of the Amiga light years on.
D 190 RSI CEBIT DEMO. Terrific demo, with the best ever music *
D 223 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO 2 Not quite as good as the first, stillgood!
D 225 HORIZON MEGADEMO (Sleeping Bag) Superb ray traced anim. Great
D 236 GOLDFIRE ULTIMATE FX....This group continues to improve!!
D 242 3-D DEMOS....Get out your 3-D glasses and CHECK THESE OUT!

POWER DEMOS

(All demos in this section require loads of memory)

P 001/2 WALKER DEMO 1 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 003/4 WALKER DEMO 2 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 021-026 UPGRADE(1.5 MEG 2 DRIVES 6 yes 6 disks!!!) multi part anim
P 010/11 HEADKICK ANIM (2 MEG 2 DISKS plus HARD-DRIVE)
P 012/3/4 STATION AT KHERN (2 MEG 3 DISKS)
P 030/1 DRAGONS LAIR 2 GAME DEMO Superb (3 MEG, 2 DISKS)
P 032/3/4 BUZZED Great Ray traced anim (2 MEG, 3 DISKS)
P 035/6/7/8 AUTOMATED LIGHT (BATTLESTAR GALACTICA) (3 MEG, 4 DISKS)
P 044/5 ANTI LEMMING DEMO (2 MEG)Excellent Eric Shwartz animation.
P 046/7 THE DATING GAME (3 MEG 2 DISK SET) 4 mins long anim!! Truly impressive Eric Schwartz demo
P 050-3 TOBIAS RITCHER: LANDING (4 MEG) (4 DISKS) Brilliant!

AMIGA DEMOS

D 243 KEFRENS - THE WALL.....Great intro! Good graffix, then so so
D 259 PHENOMENA ENIGMA Absolutely Awesome!!! Fantastic, Get it
D 261 SIMPSONS DEMO BY DECAY: Probably the best so far. (1 MEG)
D 264 ANALOGUE MEGA DEMO. Great intro and novel demo selection.
D 265 GALLOW MEGADEMO Purple Haze! Great colours, fair demos.
D 267 BASS MEGA DEMO. Great housey music throughout.
D 269 PULLING THE TRIGGER. Loved the music! Well presented demos (1 meg)
D 294 SILENTS: ICE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Brill demo, More interesting for coders.
D 295 TOMSOFT: VIRTUAL WORLD (1 MEG) Its a classic. Best this year.
D 296 MAGNETIC FIELDS: HYSTERISIS. Good demo, now loader friendly.
D 299 TAS EGO TRIP (1 MEG) Huge demo, great music and value.
D 700 PMC ALPHA OMEGA Ray-tracing, vectors, excellent.
D 704 ITS MENTAL 3 Sick jokes, cartoons etc. Not for the nervous.
D 705 VOYAGE Cleverly linked demos. Good vectors.
D 706 THE CULT: VECTOR DANCE 2 Good GFX and original vector FX.
D 708 ANARCHY DEMO So new I can't remember what it was called!!
S 393/4/5 DEFINATIVE MADONNA SLIDESHOW...(3 disks) 1 meg & 2 drives
S 441 INVISIBLE WORLD SLIDESHOW. See it and itch. Micro bugs
S 486/7 WWF ANIM AND SLIDES (1 MEG) (2 DISK SET) US wrestling
H 545 JET FIGHTER ANIM...Similar to The Run, but far far better (1 MEG)
H 555 BATMAN THE MOVIE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Good funny cartoon
H 559 MAGICIAN AND JOGGER ANIMATIONS (1 MEG). .Ray traced anims.
H 560 CAR & UNICYCLE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Brill anim, a must for fans!
H 564 EVIL DEAD DEMO (1 MEG).. Get the goulies, before they get yours
H 565 RGB & FOCUS (1 MEG)....The famous 'stretching nose' animation!
H 573 TOO MUCH 3D (1 MEG)....The spaceship flies out of the screen!
H 576 IRAQ DEMO Amusing animation of what might have been
H 577 MORE AEROTOONS More in the series of Stealthy cartoons
H 579 MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS More cute anims from Steve Packer
H 607 WINGS ANIMATION. Brilliant stuff and long too! (1 MEG)Good
H 636/7 STAR TREK MEGADEMO (1 MEG, 2 DISKS) Best of Ritcher!
H 645 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 2 Super-Star chuck anims
H 647 VIETNAM ANIM (1 MEG) Another Stealthey-type animation
H 650 OPTIMUM PRESSURE CRISIS (1 MB) Great series of animated slides
H 652 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 3 Latest works from Steve.
H 653 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 4 .....and more.
YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 5 Final in the series
X110 FRAXION HORROR Great cartoon graphic demo of nasty stuff.

MUSIC

M 005 MAHONEY & KAKTUS Brilliant music disk
M 030 DIGITAL CONCERT 2: Over 12 mins of mixed house music.
M 200/1/2 SAE AMAZING TUNES 2 (3 DISKS 1 MEG)...Superb!
M 212 MAG FIELDS CHIP FESTIVAL....Another huge collection.
M 216/7 RAF MEGA MIX 2 (2 DISK SET)....Good quality music mix.
M 226 DYNAMITE BEATS 4...Another very classy music disk from Max
M 230 DEXION PARTY MUSIC AND PICCYS....A good disk as always
M 232 ALCATRAZ MUZIC.....Classy presentation, 3 good tracks!!!
M 269 ALCATRAZ MORE THAN MUSIC. Superb.
M 311 LIONS: INXS (1 MEG) 2 tracks of remixed INXS.
M 314 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 1 (1 MB) Beaty, housey music.
M 315 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 2 (1 MB) More of the same. Good.
M 316 LSD: DON'T PANIC (1 MB) Well presented good sounds

ANIMATION SPECIAL!

The works of Tobias Richter. All require 1Mb.
H 002 Agatron Anim. 2 Misc - Jet fighter landing. Basic.
H 003 Agatron Anim. 3 Star Trek - Shuttle fly past.
H 005 Agatron Anim. 5 Star Trek - Klingon fires Torpedoes
H 007 Agatron Anim. 7 Star Wars - Fighter doing loops etc
H 009 Agatron Anim. 9 Star Wars - Fighter flyby. Impressive
H 010 Agatron Anim. 10 Star Trek - Enterprise in dry dock
H 011 Agatron Anim. 11 Tron - Tank vs Deaktivator. Good vectors
H 012 Agatron Anim. 12 Tron Animation. Not one of the best
H 013 Agatron Anim. 13 Misc - Robo 1. A robot waving.
H 014 Agatron Anim. 14 Star Trek - Workbee and Reliant. 3 Shots.
H 017 Agatron Anim. 17 Star Trek - TWOK Animation. Short but OK.
H 018 Agatron Anim. 18 Star Trek - Enterprise fly by. Short
H 020 Agatron Anim. 20 Misc - Huey the helicopter taking off
H 023 Agatron Anim. 23 Star Trek - Fleet Manoevre. Brilliant
H 024 Agatron Anim. 24 Misc - A pen signing 'Tevox'
H 025 Agatron Anim. 25 The Run. Superb car chase. A classic
H 026 Agatron Anim. 26 Misc - A ship rocking at sea. Poss Bug.
H 027 Agatron Anim. 27 Misc - A book opening!
H 028 Agatron Anim. 28 Star Trek - Shuttle and Enterprise
H 029 Agatron Anim. 29 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon in chase
H 030 Agatron Anim. 30 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon goes hyper
H 031 Agatron Anim. 31 Misc - Porsch rising out of a table
H 032 Agatorn Anim. 32 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 033 Agatron Anim. 33 Space - Space probe passing. Short.
H 034 Agatron Anim. 34 Star Trek - The Space Office. A bit short
H 035 Agatron Anim. 35 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 036 Agatron Anim. 36 Star Trek - Bird of pray loop de loop!
H 037 Agatron Anim. 37 Misc - Tobias goes knackers!

FISH, T-BAG, AND GLAMOUR DISKS

We now have all the FISH disks up to 520. The FISH AQUARIUM holds up to FF470, Beyond that is a Fish index disk. We currently have TBag disks up to 54. For contents of Fish, TBag, and all the other disks check out our latest catalogue disk. IT'S AMAZING11 (1MB only)
We also have a collection of over 50 glamour disks. 5 or 10 disk 'best selection' packs available on request.

GAMES

G 107 STAR TREK GAME Good graphic adventure, Best with 1 meg (2 disks)
G 117 EATMINE Addictive Boulderdash clone. (not A1500 etc)
G 133 PD GAMES COMPO Good selection inc Welltrix and Breakout.
G 136 DRIP Very tricky painter type game. Almost commercial quality!
G 142 PD GAMES COMPO 3....Great Pacman plus 2 others.
G 143 JEOPARDY (1 MEG)....Version of the board game Risk!
G 152 PD GAMES COMPO 9....Battlemech, Bullrun (Battle Sim) and more
G 154 BATTLEFORCE (1 MEG)....Strategy battle game.
G 159 ANTEP (1 MEG)....RPG also SLOTS, a good car chase game.
G 170 MEGABALL. The ultimate PD Breakout game?
G 171 ZEUS Simple but addictive puzzle game. Great.
G 175 CUBULUS. Great 'Rubics Cube' type puzzle. Excellent.
G 178 WIZZYS QUEST (1 MEG) Super game for PD. (Shareware).
G 179 LLAMATRON By Jeff Minter, blast the beasties (Shareware).
G 180 BLOCK IT 1.2 A tough but addictive puzzle game.
G 181 JT's GAME COMPENDIUM Some old, but most are new.
G 182 MENTAL IMAGE GAMEDISK 1 A superb compilation of new games
G 185 BLACKJACK LAB More serious than a game, inc tutor!
G 187 SUPER SKODA CHALLENGE (1MB) A Lada fun for 4 players.
G 189 NO MANS LAND (1MB) A good 2 player shoot each other game.
G 197 NBS GREAT GAMES VOL 3... Super new games
G 198 PATIENCE CARD GAMES..Superb games and graphics

EDUCATION

E 006/7 LEARN AND PLAY....Games plus maths and words (kids aged 5+)
E 008 TALKING COLOURING BOOK.....Draw the pictures then colour them

NBS PD UPDATE 8 WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON. Recent existing customers will be mailed their copy free, to secure yours, just send in a stamped self-addressed envelope.

UTILITIES

THE NBS BEGINNERS GUIDE TO VIRUS

(and what to do about it) DISK REF U 110
"There is probably more software destroyed by the ignorant use of a virus killer than the virus's themselves!"
Confused by virus killers? This new kit presents for the first time a new and totally safe way to test for a virus, and when you've definitely found one, helps you kill it. Will locate all known or unknown virus (excluding Hard Drives) Full and simple docs included!

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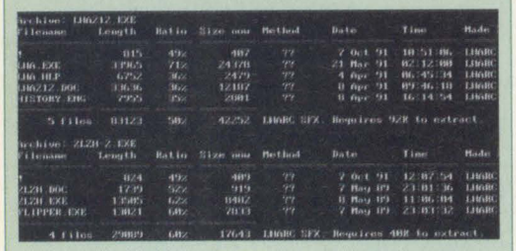
PC

❶ LHA Utilities 2.12 — Issue 2 — 95%

Software Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna CF7 9PZ

Archiving and dearchiving files has never been easier with this collection of powerful tools, guaranteed to compact large numbers of files into a much smaller single file.


Archive: LHA12.EXE
Filename Length Ratio Size now Method Date Time Mode
LHA.EXE 37965 71% 24478 -?? 21-Mar-91 02:12:00 -lhark-
LHA HLP 6752 36% 2479 -?? 4-Apr-91 06:45:34 -lhark-
LHA12.DOC 10636 36% 12482 -?? 8-Apr-91 09:46:10 -lhark-
HISTORY.LHA 7955 25% 2981 -?? 8-Apr-91 16:14:54 -lhark-
5 files 83123 50% 42252 -lhark- SFX. Requires 92K to extract
Archive: ZLZH Z.EXE
Filename Length Ratio Size now Method Date Time Mode
ZLZH.DOC 1739 52% 919 -?? 7-May-89 23:01:36 -lhark-
ZLZH.EXE 13485 62% 8402 -?? 8-May-89 11:06:04 -lhark-
UNZIPPER.EXE 13821 68% 2633 -?? 7-May-89 23:01:32 -lhark-
4 files 29089 68% 17743 -lhark- SFX. Requires 40K to extract

Hanging on in at No 1, *LHA Utilities* for all archiving problems

❷ Shareware Selection — Issue 1 — 88%

Benetech Systems, 21 Loughborough Road, Leicester ☎ 0533 611231

23 disks containing a variety of programs, including a number of utilities that handle such things as disk copying, a keyboard accelerator plus a few other goodies.

❸ Searchlight — Issue 2 — 88%

Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

One of the best bulletin board system (BBS) packages available anywhere, and this cut-down trial version is available as shareware!

❹ Winbatch — Issue1 — 85%

Omicron Systems Ltd, 45 Blenheim Crescent, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

A handy utility that enables you to write your own batch files to control Microsoft Windows by using a powerful batch file control language.

❺ ASM 14 & CPU 24 — Issue 1 — 85%

Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

Can't find the program you want? Why not write your own? These two programs work together to provide an entry-level introduction to writing PC programs in assembly. You write the programs using *ASM 14* and then run them within *CPU 24*.

❻ Scout — Issue 4 — 84%

Public Domain and Shareware Library, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, Sussex TN6 1UL ☎ 0892 663298

A compilation packed with TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident programs) that can be recalled at the press of a key. Everything from disk formatting to executing programs.

❼ Printer Dolly — Issue 4 — 83%

Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun, CF7 9PZ ☎ 0443 238630

Gives you control of your printer no matter what program is running. Supports Hewlett Packard Diskjet and Laserjet, Epson LQ series and Cannon BJ10e bubble jet printers.

❽ Flexibak Plus — Issue 1 — 82%

Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

Flexibak Plus enables you to make regular back-ups of your drive, but only backs up the files that have changed since the previous back-up, reducing the time the process takes.

❾ Wizard, PopUp & RW Menu 2.03 — Issue 2 — 82%

Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun CF7 9PZ

A collection of three different DOS replacement front-end programs that make running your programs as simple as pressing a couple of keys.

❿ Disktree — Issue 3 — 82%

PSA, Tarnwood, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Near Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

One of the most powerful DOS front-ends that makes basic and more advanced disk functions easily accessible by displaying file information in the form of a graphical tree.

ST

❶ GFA Basic 2 — Issue 1 — 95%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading ☎ 0734 452416

Once commercially available, this is a fully working version of the GFA Basic programming language, one of the best versions of BASIC available for the ST.

❷ Empire Soundtracker — Issue 1 — 91%

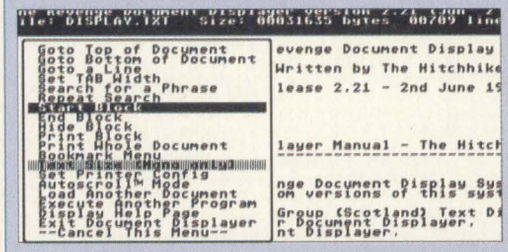
Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading ☎ 0734 452416

Now you can create music along the lines of the tunes found in games and demos – *Empire Soundtracker* enables you to sequence four channels of samples to make the music, even in stereo if you're lucky enough to have an STE.

❸ Hitchhiker's Utilities Disk — Issue 4 — 86%

Office PD Choice, Suite 14, Avon House, Town Centre, Cumbernauld G67 1EJ ☎ 0236 737901

A compilation of utilities which do everything from custom disk formatting to disk cataloguing and lots more besides. Very powerful and well worth a look.



***Displayer*: one of the utilities on the *Hitchhiker's* compilation**

❹ The Duplicator — Issue 4 — 85%

Softcell Services Shareware, 25 Maywood, Brynna, Pontyclun, CF7 9PZ ☎ 0443 238630

A copying program that copies complete disks in one go as opposed to file-by-file. A couple of handy extra features puts this piece of software ahead of the pack.

❺ Gemini — Issue 2 — 85%

Arrow PD, 6 Kents Orchard, Perry Street, South Chard, Somerset TA20 2QB

One of the most powerful and attractive desktops for the ST that replaces the normal GEM operating system display and makes the computer more friendly to use.

❻ Deskjet Utilities — Issue 1 — 82%

Arrow PD, 6 Kents Orchard, Perry Street, South Chard, Somerset TA20 2QB

If you have a Hewlett Packard Deskjet printer then this is a disk you can't afford to be without – it contains 16 useful tools to use with the peripheral, including an address labeller and a *Degas* screen dump tool.

❼ Double Click Utilities — Issue 3 — 82%

Floppyshop, 45 Provst Graham Avenue, Hazelhead, Aberdeen

A selection of small-but-useful utilities that perform such varied functions as magnify the screen, put the mouse pointer in the centre of the screen and display disk information. Most are unusual and all are handy.

❽ TV Titler 2.0 — Issue 1 — 77%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness ☎ 0463 225736

This is a demo of a commercial video titling package that manipulates *Degas*-format graphic images, enabling you to create fancy titles for your video recordings.

❾ DIY Projects — Issue 2 — 75%

South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimbourne, Dorset

Provides details of several hardware projects, including making an RS-232 datalink cable and adding a stereo sound capability to your ST.

❿ STD Cat — Issue 4 — 73%

Rust PDL, 361 Ordnance Road. Enfield, Middlesex ☎ 0992 717828

Don't know what files are on what disks? Don't worry, *STD Cat* can help you out.

Amiga

❶ MessySID — Issue 3 — 93%

Strictly PD, 11 York Place, Bristol BS1 5UT

A combination of *SID* and *MessyDOS*, this essential tool not only enables you to transfer files to and from Amiga disks, but to PC disks as well.

❷ SID 1.6 — Issue 1 — 92%

George Thompson Services Ltd, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

Of all the utilities available for the Amiga, *SID* is an essential program to have, as it makes all file operations quick and easy to perform.

❸ Super C — Issue 2 — 88%

Essex Computer Systems, Freepost, Basildon, Essex SS16 4BR

CLI utilities galore are to be found on this disk. A large number of tools that do things like displaying IFF images, checking for viruses and speeding up the mouse pointer.

❹ ImageLab — Issue 4 — 87%

Ed Lib, Scotland Farm,Stockwood Road, Brislington, Bristol

If you've created a picture in a paint package and it's not quite right then *ImageLab* is a powerful editing tool that enables you to make the alterations you want.

❺ Windows Bench — Issue 3 — 86%

NBS, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QA ☎ 0983 529594

Not a total replacement for the Amiga's Workbench display, this disk makes it look like Windows on the PC, as well as providing a number of crucial utilities, including *SID*.

❻ DeafLab — Issue 2 — 85%

George Thompson Services Ltd, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

A program for the deaf or hard of hearing, this program enables you to convert text messages to sign language, and very good it is, too.

❼ Sound Studio — Issue 4 — 84%

AmigaNuts United, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southhampton

If your samples don't sound quite the way you want them to, then you can use *Sound Studio* to customise them to your specifications.

❽ ARTM — Issue 1 — 82%

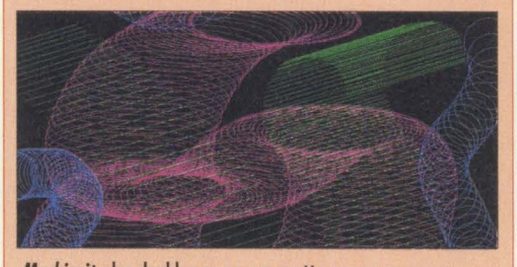
17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982

If you want to view the inner workings of the Amiga's Exec system or customise it for your own use then this could be the program for you – it displays all the relevant information on-screen and permits you to edit it.

❾ Mackie — Issue 1 — 82%

George Thompson Services Ltd, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

A versatile CLI macro utility that enables you to call up the program of your choice simply by pressing a specified series of keystrokes.



***Mackie*: it also doubles as a very pretty screen saver**

❿ ScreenMod — Issue 2 — 82%

17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982

This simple program enables you to alter the attributes of any screen that runs under Intuition, letting you customise the way programs and screens appear on-screen.

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(3 DISKS) This pack contains **KIDS PAINT** (paint program for the young, very easy to follow), **STORYLAND** (an activity Adventure that uses graphics to capture the child's imagination and attention), **SHAPES** (a shapes game to encourage logical thought). The above programs would suit the 5 - 8 year old. **THIS PACK COSTS £4.99 INC VAT**

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The shareware gamble

PUBLIC EYE

Is this man mad? Jeff Minter, the boss of a successful commercial company, Llamasoft, and widely regarded as, 'a bit strange', suddenly decided last year to release a perfectly good game as shareware. It seemed like financial suicide. Had he finally lost his marbles, or was it a canny move? James Leach was brave enough to ask...

Llamasoft is one of the oldest independent games software houses in Britain. Founded in 1982, its boss is the eccentric, animal-loving Jeff Minter. Last year he decided to take what many thought was a risky step with the launch of the arcade game *Llamatron* as shareware. At his home in Wales Jeff revealed to *Public Domain* the reasons behind this daring move:

PD: Jeff, why release *Llamatron* as shareware?
JM: It seems to me that the software marketplace is snowed under with big mega-corporations asking twenty-five quid for the same game every time, with just the name of a new film licence slapped on the box. I thought it would make a nice change if there was something different on offer.

I'm a great fan of decent arcade games, such as *Robotron* from Williams, and I felt that other people would be into a similar sort of game for their ST or Amiga. I decided to go into shareware because I firmly believe that good software sells itself. I also like the idea that if you get hold of the game from a friend, a PD company or bulletin board, and you like it, you'll happily pay £5 for it. If you don't like it, you pass on your copy to someone else who hasn't seen it. It's self-distributing, everybody's happy and nobody gets ripped off.

The shareware concept is very appealing. Everybody who pays, does so with a smile on their face. The game gets everywhere and people who wouldn't dream of buying a game are suddenly into it. We estimate that there are more copies of *Llamatron* in the UK than there are of *Lemmings*.

Flash boxes and page ads in the mags are all very attractive, but if you've got a good game underneath it all, it should sell well however it's packaged. I hoped that *Llamatron*, which wasn't advertised of course, would spread amongst arcade fans and that they would tell me how much they liked

Jeff's fave raves

So which of his own products is Jeff most proud of?

1 Revenge of the Mutant Camels
"I still like *Revenge of the Mutant Camels* although it's now looking a bit ropey. In its time, the computer press said it was worth buying a C64 for alone. Praise indeed!"

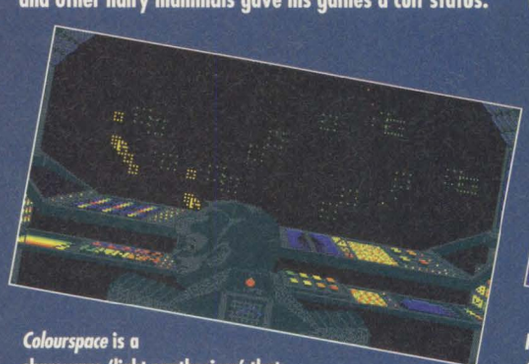
2 Ancipital
"I liked the mix of platform and shoot-'em-up styles here. Also, you can walk on the walls and ceiling, making it a platform game with a difference (you can walk on the walls and ceiling in it)."

3 Llamatron
"There's an awful lot going on in *Llamatron*. I like the idea of pushing the computer's envelope – making it sweat and really work hard. I try to do this with all my games, and with *Llamatron* I hope it shows. Certainly the PD-using public think so!"

The history of Jeff Minter: software publisher, prog

Jeff Minter has been around since the dawn of home computing, starting off writing games for Commodore's machine of the moment, the VIC 20. Early games like *Gridruuner* established the fast and furious pace that have become a Minter trademark. His zany sense of humour and frequent reference to llamas, camels, sheep and other hairy mammals gave his games a cult status.

As well as the more mainstream computers, he's written programs for less-popular machines too, exploiting the machine's hardware capabilities to make the most of the features available. He even developed a version of *Llamatron* specially to take advantage of Atari's advanced TT, though there's no more than a few hundred machines around in this country.



***Colourspace* is a shareware 'light synthesiser' that started life as *Psychedelia* on the Atari 8-bits in the mid 80s**

***Revenge of the Mutant Camels* is the latest product from Llamasoft and continues Jeff's theme of heroic mammals**

But is shareware cost effective?

Many people think that it's only worth selling top-notch games at full-price, as they usually take large teams of programmers months, even years, to develop. The budget market, where games retail for £8-10, is a more viable alternative, but the programmer only receives a tiny proportion of this – 10 per cent is the standard rate. There's the publishing company, distributors, retailers, packaging, promotion and production which all take their cut as well.

Shareware is free from all these unnecessary overheads. Once you've sent off a few disks to some PD libraries, it's just a case of waiting for the contributons to flood in. This allows the registration fee to be much lower, although you are, of course, relying on the honesty of the games players to send in their donations. This is what puts many programmers off releasing games as shareware when they're good enough to be released commercially. After all, why risk it when there are no guaranteed returns? But, as *Llamatron* proves, it's possible to make money out of shareware. You'll make as much selling a shareware game at £5 as from a budget game costing twice the price, even if you sell a fifth as many copies.

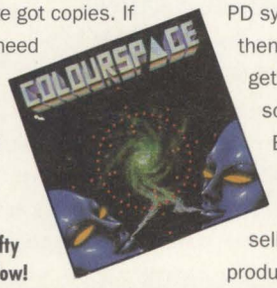
Furry animals play a big part in Jeff's life. They star in his games and he owns a few too

it by sending me their fivers. The great thing is, it's worked! We sent out 40 disks to PD libraries first. Then the game was given a bit of help by being featured on the coverdisk of *ST Format*. We received 1,000 registrations in the week after *ST Format* hit the streets, and they've been flowing in ever since, at the rate of about 20 a day.

How happy are you with the response?

Very happy. We've had several thousand registrations from all over the world – far more than we expected. I've got a large file of letters from people who say how much they like *Llamatron*. It's very heart-warming. I've even received a fax from some management bods over at Commodore in the States, saying how much they enjoyed it.

We estimate that one per cent of people that own *Llamatron* have paid their £5. It doesn't sound a lot, but think of how many people have got copies. If two per cent registered I'd never need to write commercial software again, and could live off shareware. Of course, I'd write as much of it as I could!



Register for *Colourspace* and you get a nifty folder, a poster and a whole lot more. Wow!

With shareware all I get is positive feedback. If people aren't happy with it they wipe their disks or just 'forget' to pay, so I only hear from those honest types who are genuinely pleased to own the game.

And everybody seems to be playing it. People aged between four and 70 are into it. It just shows you the power of shareware, really. That and the fact that people still want to play an old-fashioned exciting blast-'em-up. Fair restored my faith in human nature, it has.

How does shareware compare to commercial software? Can it be as good?

Anybody can sit in their bedroom and write a game. Selling it is tough, though. If you take it to an established software house you might never see it again or you might get stitched up over money. It's a risk. If you distribute unprotected copies through the PD system as shareware, and the game is any good then it'll take off like a house on fire. Copies will get everywhere and soon the money will roll in. It sounds idealistic, but it does happen that way. But if your game isn't brilliant, shareware can't save it. It'll probably fizzle out and you won't get many registrations. Only good shareware sells itself, which is tough on poor quality products, but means that the end user is getting a fabulous deal. I think shareware is in the ascendancy. People with money who want big games will buy consoles. Everyone else will be tired of the same game time after time, and will look to PD as an alternative for great (and cheap) stuff.

A lot of people can't see how shareware works. Fine, then. It's not for them. Leave it to those who want it, use it and are happy to pay for it when it lives up to their expectations. They'll distribute it too. These are the kind of people who will ultimately make it a success.

What's next on the release schedule?

I'm very busy at the moment, but I'm planning to do a shareware game which will make *Llamatron* look slow. I'm toying with the idea of updating *Hellgate*, which was a mad little 8K VIC 20 game. It'll be an incredible 3D mind-altering affair, and it'll be a nice reward to all those folks who sent in their fivers for *Llamatron*. But I'm certainly sticking with the shareware concept. I make some dosh, no-one gets ripped off, the users get to play a fun game and everyone's happy. PD

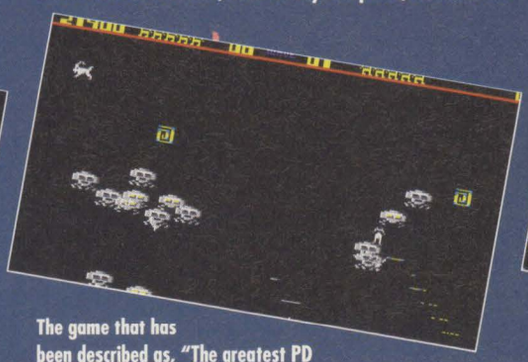
ming wizard, lover of 'cute' hairy mammals and eccentric old hippy

Not only are his games eccentric, but his company, Llamasoft, is one of the few software producers to survive from the early days when computing was very much a back-bedroom industry.

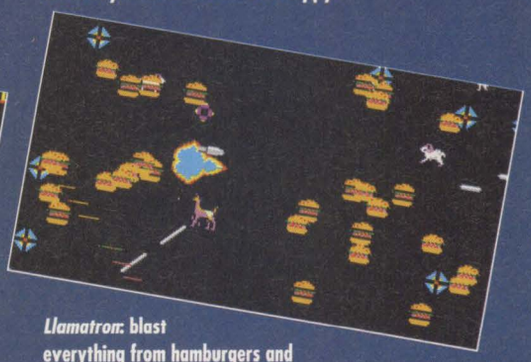
It's not only games that have appeared from the Llamasoft stable. One area in which Jeff has worked extensively is that of 'light synthesisers', where the computer's keyboard is played like that of a musical instrument, producing patterns of light, rather than musical sounds. One of these, *Colourspace*, has been released as a shareware product. (See the review in issue 1 of *Public Domain*, page 118.)

Jeff now lives and works in a farm cottage in the middle of rural Wales, with every computer, console and arcade machine worth having piled up in his low-beamed living room. His Siamese cat, Dennis (named after his brother's Renault 12) sits by the fire and in the back garden are his two sheep, Molly and Flossie. Pictures of various herbivores adorn the walls of his home and there are piles of Pink Floyd CDs stacked everywhere. You could say that he's a bit of a hippy.

Inter-species harmony is the name of the game as goats and camels fight side by side in *Revenge*

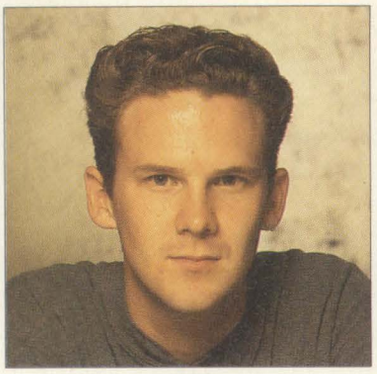


The game that has been described as, "The greatest PD game ever" (by us in issue one actually), *Llamatron*



***Llamatron*: blast everything from hamburgers and mutant mandelbrots to coke cans and Manic Minters**

Games



From high-speed jinks on the race track to trekking across the galaxy in search of aliens to assassinate. Adam Waring checks out the latest batch of games that are guaranteed to melt your joystick, and all for next to nothing...

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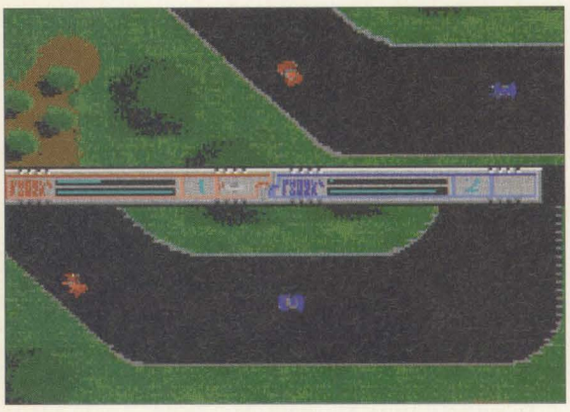
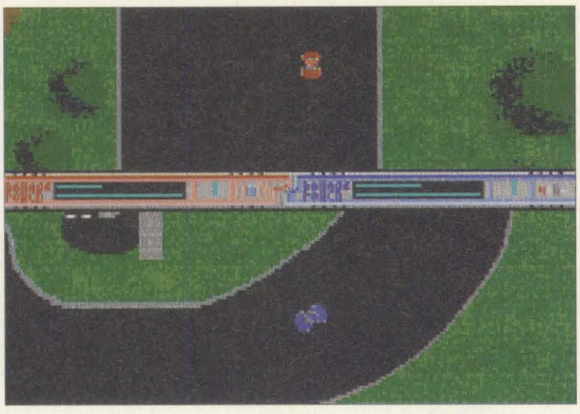


Two can play at once in *Battlecars*, which is the most fun. The computer is far too accurate in cornering, which makes for a bit of an unfair race



Zoom around the race track at speeds approaching a stunning 10 mph! Go any faster and you'll run the risk of writing off your car

Battlecars (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1Mb Plus compatible • LPD71 • £3.50 • Déjà Vu • 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA
☎ 0942 495261

It's not the taking part that counts, it's the winning. And the drivers in *Battlecars* will go to any lengths to ensure they pass the chequered flag in pole position.

One or two players can take part. When there's just one player, the computer takes control of the other car. Two people racing against each other is far more fun, though.

Winning races is good for two reasons: it boosts your ego and it also means you win cash prizes. And cash can be used to beef up your automobile's performance.

And it's not spark plugs, cans of Castrol and 'Honk if you had it last night' window stickers that you can buy. There are missiles, laser beams, power steering and armour plating available to increase your chances of winning. During the races the weapons can be used to give your opponent a good pasting. Blast him into oblivion and you've won without having to drive an inch further. Sportsmanship, that's what it's all about.

It takes three laps to complete each race, but more often than not it'll all be over long before then, with one of the cars a smouldering heap of twisted metal on the roadside.

There's a choice of seven courses on which to race, and they do get quite devious. Each track is many times larger than the screen and so you only see a fairly small portion of it at a time. The screen scrolls smoothly with your car in the centre. What's more, the screen is split into two windows with player one taking the top half of the screen while player two watches their progress in the bottom half.

And it's the fact that you can't always see what's coming that actually causes more damage than any amount of guided missiles. All too often you'll find yourself slamming into the side of the track as a corner suddenly comes into view and it's too late to do anything about it. The only safe way to progress around the course without damaging your car is to go at the speed of a pipe-smoking Sunday driver.

The control system works reasonably well, with the cars accelerating to reach full speed and slowing down rather than coming to an abrupt halt when you release the button. The weaponry bit, though a good idea, doesn't come into the game much as just avoiding crashes gives you enough to worry about.

In one-player mode you can select the skill level of your opponent but this only changes their speed. The computer rarely makes mistakes which makes it a rather unfair race. *Battlecars* could have been really good, but the high collision rate mars things rather. You'll have fun in two-player mode, but it's not an exciting race when you have to travel at a snail's pace all the time.

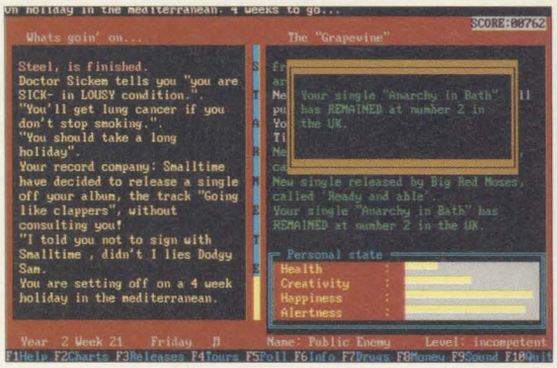
AMIGA **79%**

Rockstar (Shareware)

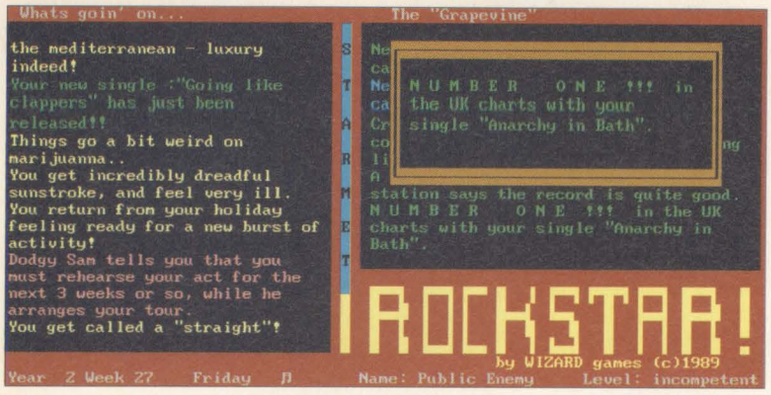
PC • C1016 • Registration £12 • Testware UK Ltd, 46 The Avenue, Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 4QD
☎ 0423 886415

Being a pop star isn't all it's made out to be. The lure of fame and fortune (and all those groupies) may seem attractive, but it's not easy making your mark on pop history. So, save yourself the disappointment (not to mention the expense of buying a guitar, drum kit or harpsichord) and see whether you've got what it takes with *Rockstar*, a pop star sim.

The screen is split into two parts: on the right the 'grapevine' gives you info on what's happening generally in the pop world – who's putting out records, how your releases are faring and what the music papers and radio stations are saying. The left-hand side of the screen is taken up with stuff that's more specific to your band –


On holiday in the Mediterranean. 4 weeks to go...
SCORE:00762
Whats goin' on...
The "Grapevine"
Steel, is finished.
Doctor Sicken tells you "you are SICK- in LOUSY condition.".
"You'll get lung cancer if you don't stop smoking.".
"You should take a long holiday".
Your record company: Smalltime have decided to release a single off your album, the track "Going like clappers", without consulting you!
"I told you not to sign with Smalltime , didn't I lies Dodgy Sam.
You are setting off on a 4 week holiday in the mediterranean.
Your single "Anarchy in Bath" has REMAINED at number 2 in the UK.
New single released by Big Red Moses, called 'Ready and able'.
Your single "Anarchy in Bath" has REMAINED at number 2 in the UK.
Personal state
Health
Creativity
Happiness
Alertness
Year 2 Week 21 Friday
Name: Public Enemy
Level: incompetent
F1Help F2Charts F3Releases F4Tours F5Roll F6Info F7Drugs F8Money F9Sound F10Quit

***Rockstar*: it's too much! The pressure of being a pop idol is having a detrimental effect on my health. A quick holiday should set things right**


Whats goin' on...
the mediterranean - luxury indeed!
Your new single :"Going like clappers" has just been released!!
Things go a bit weird on marijuanna..
You get incredibly dreadful sunstroke, and feel very ill.
You return from your holiday feeling ready for a new burst of activity!
Dodgy Sam tells you that you must rehearse your act for the next 3 weeks or so, while he arranges your tour.
You get called a "straight"!
The "Grapevine"
NUMBER ONE !!! in the UK charts with your single "Anarchy in Bath".
station says the record is quite good.
NUMBER ONE !!! in the UK charts with your single "Anarchy in Bath".
ROCKSTAR!
by WIZARD games (c)1989
Year 2 Week 27 Friday
Name: Public Enemy
Level: incompetent

***Rockstar*: we've made it at last! Fame! Number one in the hit parade, there's no stopping us now. But don't worry, I remember my roots. Now get out of my way, peasant (Oh, sorry Mum...)**

how the gigs are going, news from the recording studio and who's pushing drugs in your direction today.

You get offered more drugs than you'd expect to find in your average NHS hospital. It may be a junkie's dream, but if you just say 'no', then you're more often than not given a sharp rebuke along the lines of, "You're more boring than the Flatulent Nun's sax player." Peer pressure!

The frequent offer of dope, tabs and more lethal drugs does begin to get irritating after a while, though. If you do decide to succumb to the offers then the screen flashes for a while in a simulated trip. This, too, rapidly becomes boring.

The information comes in thick and fast; sometimes so fast that it's impossible to keep up. Largely the data is irrelevant – who cares whether the Scabby Growths have released a single entitled *I'd Rather Die Than Kiss my Gran*? It has no bearing on how well you're doing but adds to the 'humour' of the game (which, incidentally, is pretty infantile throughout with lots of bum gags – all good stuff, then). More important events, such as reaching number one, flash up in boxes, but these sometimes obscure other text.

You carve your name into the history of pop by making simple decisions; whether to gig, record or laze around for a bit. All the messy money side of things is hidden away from you, presumably by your manager, Dodgy Sam. Ask to see your bank balance and you're told you have, 'a few thousand pounds'. That's as detailed as it gets, which is all you need to know. When you want to cut some vinyl you're simply told the types of recording studios you can afford.

You can pull up other information, such as taking a gander at the charts or seeing how you're feeling mentally, physically and spiritually, at the press of a function key.

Rockstar is a text-only game, and a fairly simple one at that. But it's well-presented and if the schoolboy humour strikes a chord, then you could find yourself rocking and rolling all night long.

PC **69%**

Pigeon Post (PD)

ST • Game 134 • EMPDL
54 Watnall Road, Hucknall, Nottingham NG15 7LE
☎ 0602 630071

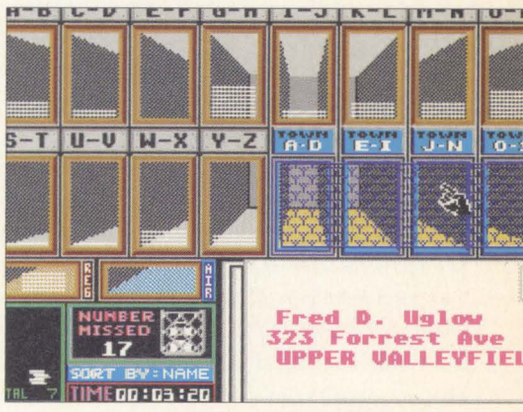
Not an enviable job, being a postie. It's bad enough having to get up at six o'clock every morning, be it rain, hail or snow, to deliver the nation's mail. What's even worse is having to sort the things out in the first place.

And it's this unexciting job that this program attempts to simulate. OK, I can understand the appeal of racing car or killer ninja sims, but working in a sorting office? Hmm...

Well that's the job in hand and you're the one wearing the smart peaked cap and navy blue uniform. The letters come in thick and fast, and you have to slot them into the relevant pigeon holes. You can sort the mail either by surname or post town, and can choose a rate of 20, 25 or 30 letters a minute. Sorting by address is the easiest, as there are only five holes with which to contend. An additional factor you have to watch out for is that some letters are to be sent by air mail or registered post. There are separate slots for these.

You're allowed to make 25 mistakes before you're finally given

cont. p4



Where on Earth's Upper Vallyfield when it's at home? Still, yours isn't to reason why, you only work here

Mutant camels versus ferocious phone boxes – it must be the latest from Llamasoft

Revenge of the Mutant Camels (Shareware)

Amiga • £5 • Llamasoft •
49 Mount Pleasant, Tadley, Hants
☎ 0734 814478

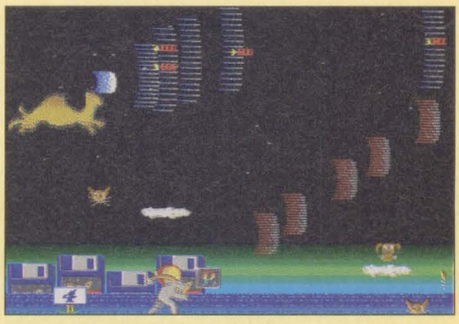
More manic Minter madness, this time a version of *Revenge of the Mutant Camels* for Amiga fans (see issue four for the ST review, page 40).

The plot is thus: you're a camel. No ordinary camel, mind, but a mutant camel who spits death rather than saliva, and you have to make your way through multiple levels of mayhem, blasting, maiming and killing as you go. You can either go it alone, or play with an Ancipital – a strange goat-like creature that can be either computer- or chum-controlled for a real massacre.

Just look at all those bonuses floating from the heavens. Collect 'em quick, they don't hang around for long

The opponents you're up against come in all sorts of weird and wonderful shapes and sizes. You find yourself locked in battle with all manner of unlikely adversaries such as phone boxes and CND signs; even Jeff himself makes an appearance.

But that's just one side of the story. There are power-ups just itching to be collected so that you can deal with the oncoming hordes in a variety of nasty ways. There are also icons that give you extra lives, invulnerability and energy. Not all the goodies waiting around the screen are good news, though. You can just as easily collect instant death, reversed controls and power-*downs*. So beware!



You can destroy your enemies in a variety of different ways. Aren't these laser blasts pretty?

The action is fast and furious, and is an improvement over the ST version. The scrolling is smoother and it seems just a little more playable. The sound is great too, with brilliant samples played throughout – you can tell this man lives in the country because of all the horses, goats and other varieties of sampled farmyard animal noises that accompany the more normal explosions.

The shareware version is the plain vanilla flavour. Send off your measly £5 registration fee and you're entitled to the 1Mb version that features enhanced sound samples.

Check out Public Eye on page 36 for an interview with the man behind Revenge of the Mutant Camels, *Jeff Minter.*

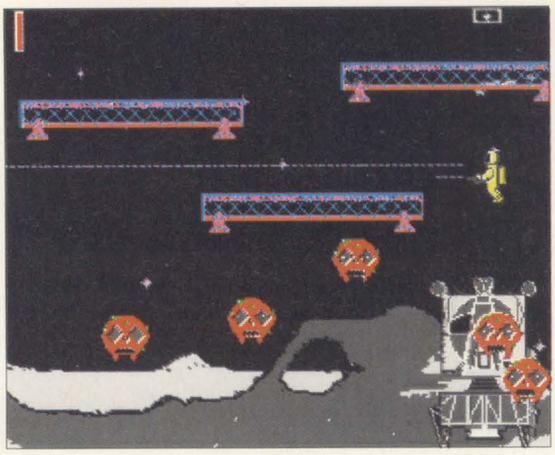
AMIGA **91%**

from 39

the sack. I thought postmen were given this every day (Oh, ha, ha, ha – sarcastic reader's voice). Once you've completed the day's work, then that's it. Game over and you're invited to try again. I doubt whether you'll take the offer up.

Pigeon Post may conceivably increase your knowledge of what letter lies where in the alphabet, but it makes for an extremely dull game.

ST 55%



***Lunar Capers*: take that in the gizzard, alien scum. Assemble your space craft while keeping out of the vicious fiends' road**

Lunar Capers (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1Mb • LC1 • £3 • Loadcrest PD, 38 Eastbank Street Bolton, Lancs BL1 8LT ☎ 0204 33367

Any self-respecting Speccy owner will have fond memories of *Jetpac*. It was released way back in the early 80s and featured the exploits of a jetpac-wearing space explorer. His task was to build his spaceship from three component parts, fuel it up, and then take off for another, unexplored planet to do the same thing (what a strange existence).

The only problem is that the planet is inhabited by weirdos, and they aren't exactly welcoming you with open tentacles. In fact, contact with them kills you. Luckily you're armed with a laser blaster that kills all known aliens dead to give the googly-eyed greenies a good grilling. The only problem is that they soon reappear at the side of the screen.

Lunar Capers is based on this golden oldie, and you'd expect the Amiga version, with the computer's enormous processing power, excellent graphics and huge memory (the Spectrum only had 16K!), to knock the game it's based on into a plastic recycling module. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The graphics aren't as good, and playability simply isn't there.

There's nothing wrong with producing up-to-date 16-bit versions of old favourites, but surely they have to be at least on a par with the original.

AMIGA 57%

Dennis & Denise

(Licenceware)

ST • GBU77 • £2.95 • ST Club, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham ☎ 0602 410241

Kids, eh? Who knows what they get up to when they're out of the house? Probably rescuing girlfriends captured by evil dictators I shouldn't wonder. Either that, or a bit of shoplifting.

Luckily it's the former in Dennis's case. His chick, Denise, has gone missing and it's down to Den to enter Mr X's lair and get the damsel back. It's not only love that spurs Dennis on, however, as it's said there are pots of cash littered about the careless dictator's lair. Hmm, now that's more like it.

Dennis is trendily decked out in a baseball cap and a pair of converse sneakers. His task is to traverse a series of screens and each is full of traps just to make his task that little bit tougher. He has to leap and duck various missiles and other nasties. There's a time limit within which he has to make his way across every screen. If he doesn't make it, or becomes victim to one of the traps, then he's a life down.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. There are various pick-ups for

Yo, Den! You're lookin' good. Watch where you're going, though. That nasty alien-type thing probably fancies you with chips and a side salad

Mah Jong variation number 2,089 – addictive tile removing with a couple of twists

Match It (Licenceware)

ST • Bugam 90 • £2.95 • New Age PDL • 30 Anderson Estate, Lower Road, Hockley, Essex SS5 5NG

Match It is played with a set of Mah Jong tiles and the rules are similar; remove the tiles, a pair at a time, until there are none left. There are a number of differences, though. In Mah Jong, the tiles are arranged in a sort of pyramid shape, and are removed when they can freely be taken from the sides. In *Match It* the tiles are laid flat and not stacked up in any way, so that when you take them no fresh tiles are revealed.

The rules for removing them are quite different too; if a line with no more than two right angled bends can be drawn between a matching pair, only then can they be successfully taken from the board.

You may think that as you can see all tiles from the very beginning of the game that things would be easy. Not so! You're up against a strict time limit and have to beat it in order to progress to further levels.

The display is extremely attractive; the game is played against a marble-effect backdrop and the pictures on the tiles are well-drawn, depicting the four suits used in Mah Jong. Even the title screen is very pleasing to look at. Graphically the game's a stunner, which is an added bonus because the gameplay is so addictive it doesn't need to be. The music's not so bad, either, with a jolly little oriental tune playing away as the time ticks down. Nice as it is, a low volume is a great aid to the concentration.

The tricky bit is that there are often four of a certain type of tile. Match them carefully or you'll find yourself in hot water later on.

There are two lots of special tiles – flowers and seasons – which, though they show different pictures, can be matched with tiles of the same type. These also have the beneficial effect of stopping the otherwise relentless counter for a few valuable seconds.

If you're completely floundered you can press the Help key which will find a matching pair for you. Use it sparingly, though – you start off with two Helps and gain another for each level you complete without using this special key.

There's a pause function in case you have to answer the door or go to the toilet but those with sneaky minds will be disappointed – the screen blanks out in pause mode so you can't use it to your advantage to study the tiles while the computer's not looking.

Advancing in levels doesn't appear to make things any more difficult. The lay of the tiles is random and it's the luck of the draw whether you get an easy passage or not. A pity as a few new features might have spiced things up a little. Then again, maybe I just haven't managed to get that far yet...

Even so, *Match It* is a great little puzzler that requires a quick mind and quick mouse-pressing to get on.

ST 89%

Pretty and addictive: the game that stopped *Public Domain* from doing any work for two days

PUBLIC APOLOGY

M.D. OFFICE SUPPLIES WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGISE TO ALL ITS COMPETITORS IN THIS MAGAZINE, WE SHALL AS EVER BE OFFERING DISKETTES, STORAGE BOXES ETC AT REMARKABLY LOW, LOW, PRICES

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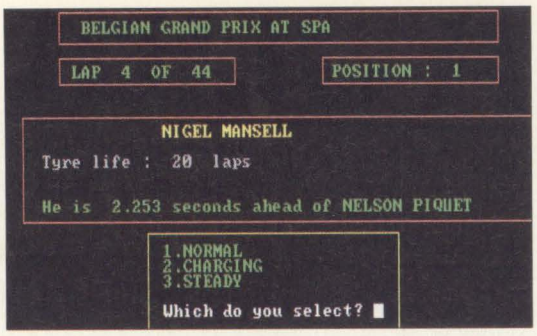
the taking. But be careful: some of these spell instant death, though thankfully most are full of money.

Every few screens a level is completed. Now's your opportunity to get an extra life. There are two rows of numbers. Swap the bottom set around to match the top row and you get your life. You can't much say fairer than that.

The graphics are fairly small but passable. The tune's nice and plays merrily away in the background without being too distracting. Not that a bit of distraction wouldn't go amiss, because the game's not really up to much. There's not a lot in the way of gameplay and it's dead easy. The pick-ups' random nature spoils things because there's always the chance that one will kill you, so they're best left well alone.

Sorry, but I couldn't care one jot whether Dennis rescues Denise.

ST 58%



Race to Win: "Zzzz Zzzz." What's that, the sound of the Williams engine reving up? No, it's only Nige taking a nap while playing

Race to Win (Shareware)

PC • CGA/EGA/VGA • Registration fee: £15 • Nazgames • 589 Bradford Road, Oakenshaw, Bradford

Grand Prix! Exciting eh? High speed thrills and spills as lumps of metal power around a race track at suicidal speeds. This game fails completely to bring any of this across to your PC.

It's a text-only racing game, and purports to simulate a racing season. You can choose the year and the country in which the race is held. The only interaction apart from that is a simple option to select how each rider should race. The computer bungs a load of statistics up on-screen after each lap and then it's back to the 'excitement'. One circuit is boring enough; a full race is about as exhilarating as reading the credits at the end of *The Godfather*.

It claims to be based on real facts and figures, using data from actual cars and real drivers. But so what? It's as dull as hell and only the most avid statistician will find any interest in it whatsoever. The rest of you should steer well clear.

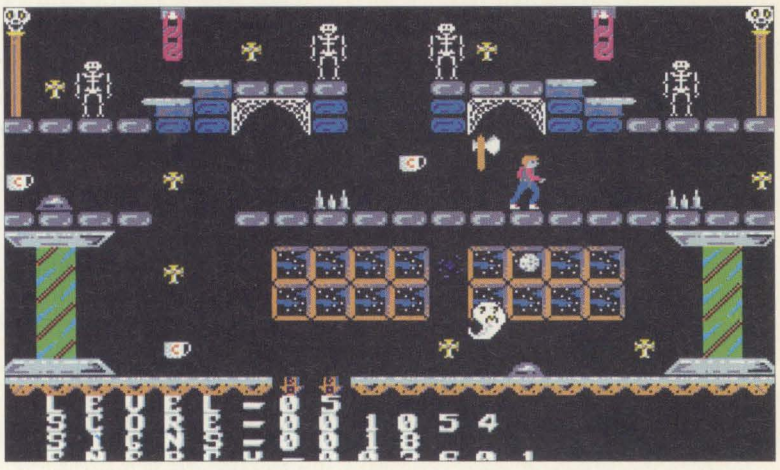
PC 28%

Haunted House (PD)

ST • 260 • Jennix PD 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

You'd have to be off your trolley to enter the spooky-looking haunted house on the top of the hill. The one with the charming, 'All ye who enter here shall perish' sign above the door.

Well, that's exactly what you have done. You must be one complete doofus if you ask me. But that can't be helped; your main concern now is



Haunted House: creepy, kooky, spooky, ooky. It's scarier than *Doctor Who*. Where's the cushion?

The first Addware game finally arrives, but is it going to revolutionise shareware?

Airmania (Shareware)

Amiga • 1595 • Registration fee: £5 • 17 Bit Software • 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Ha! Take that, facist scum! The Pi Man sends a security guard sprawling with one big greenie

Airmania was first mentioned in the very first issue of *Public Domain*. It was to be a concept-breaking game, where not only do you get a commercial-quality game very cheaply, but you also get the chance to win big-value prizes into the bargain. Does it live up to its promise?

The basic plot is to board a plane (the prize is a round-the-world flight). You play the Pi Man – an early computer game cult figure – and inexplicably all your possessions are littered around the airport. Before you can take off you have to pick them all up, buy a ticket, check in your luggage, get through customs, buy some duty free and get to the departure gate – and all in just 10 minutes. Phew!

To make things worse security at the airport is extra-tight. And it's not the usual customs officers checking whether you've got more than your allotted 200 Marlboro, either, but giant clockwork guards on patrol instead.

The guards can be foxed either by jumping over them, or blowing a giant raspberry with your huge honker to send them sprawling. Should they nab you, vital energy is taken away.

You can replenish energy by buying burgers at the fast food takeaway, though as this is near the entrance, it may be more trouble than it's worth getting there to be served. A can of Coke will top up your amazing nasal abilities.

The gameplay is, it has to be said, fairly simplistic, and hardly ground-breaking. The one long level scrolls left and right and it's simply a case of finding the required items and going up to the desks to complete your tasks.

There are some nice effects. The scrolling is smooth and has a nice parallax effect with your character disappearing behind pillars, chairs and the like. The graphics aren't bad, though the main character is pretty ugly and doesn't appear to be wearing any clothes – how he ever become a cult figure is beyond me.

There are three levels to the game, but the layout of each is identical, with only a few extra baddies thrown in to make things a little bit more difficult. Once you've completed all three levels (and it shouldn't take you long) then it's on to a tie-breaker section where you have to correctly identify a selection of flags. Once you reckon you've got this licked send off your disk and (as long as you've registered) you're in the draw for that trip of a lifetime!

It doesn't get much harder on level two. It's the same as the first level, only with bubbles to contend with

There's not much to the game, and you get the feeling that the whole enterprise centres on *that* prize. But what a prize it is (not only does the winner get to go on the flight-of-a-lifetime, but the person who gave them a disk wins an identical prize!) For this reason alone it may be worth getting hold of the disk, but *Airmania* certainly won't go down as one of the great moments of gaming history.

AMIGA 68%

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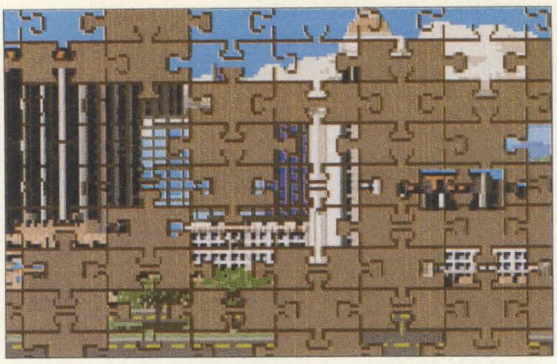
from 42

getting back out of the place again in one piece!

Haunted House is a multi-screen platform game. You have to collect a load of crosses in order to make it through that big door at the end of each level. It's not going to be easy, though, as there are ghouls a-plenty making this simplest of tasks a bit of a nightmare.



Bit like life this; a puzzle. But get all the pieces in order and you begin to see everything as a whole picture. I should be a philosopher

In fact, it's so scary even being in the spooky old manor that your energy depletes constantly. Collide with a spook and it's reduced by an even more alarming amount. The same happens when you step on a painful-looking spiky thing. You have got yourself into a bit of a pickle.

The game itself is laid out fairly well, and the graphics aren't too bad, but the animation is poor, especially the pretty odd-looking two-frame jumps made by the main character.

The music is truly dreadful: a handful of notes played over and over again. Reach for that volume control!

The basic idea's there, but the game itself is poorly presented and could have done with a lot more polish. Reasonable, but not brilliant.

ST 66%

Pick Up A Puzzle (PD)

Amiga • AMOS PD library
25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 4952

What's the worst present your Gran can give you? Worse even than a pack of monogrammed hankies or a hand-knitted balaclava? Yep, it's the 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle.

There it sits on the coffee table for months on end with just the corner bits and edges done. All social activity stops as it takes over your life: watching telly you can see it out of the corner of your eye. Temptation is too much and you have to try and slot in another couple of pieces...

Now you can play jigsaw without having your living room cluttered up, and, because the piccies are on disk, when the computer's switched off it's out of sight and out of mind. There is a selection of pretty pictures on the disk and there are three levels of difficulty. On the simplest level you're given a clear grid to show you where all the pieces go, and it's simply a case of lining the piece up and clicking the mouse button.

Things are a tad more tricky in the second level. There is no grid so it's very difficult to place any pieces that don't match up to ones that have already been put down. As a result, it's best to start at the corners, followed by the edges and get to the middle from there. Just like a real jigsaw, in fact.

It takes a turn for the worse in level three. The pieces might not be the right way up so you may have to rotate them before you can slap 'em down. Luckily you can view the picture at any time – it's a bit like looking at the top of the box to see where you are.

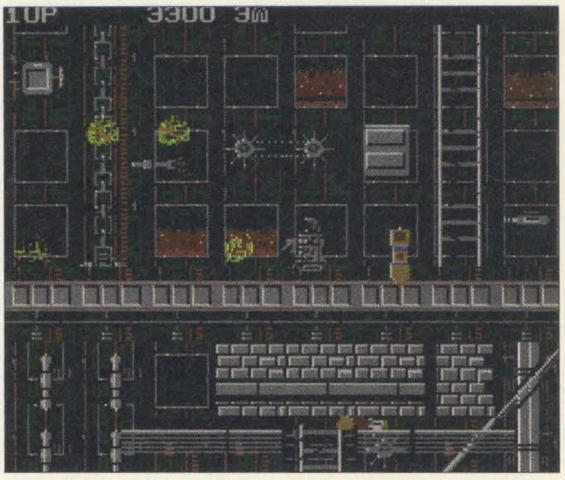
Pick Up A Puzzle isn't going to be the most addictive game you've ever played, simply because of the subject matter, but it'll provide you with a few minutes of distraction. It does have one major advantage over a real jigsaw, though; you won't find that the last piece is missing.

AMIGA 70%

Droid (PD)

ST • Gam 175 • ST Club • 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham, NG1 1LX ☎ 0602 410241

It's precious, this planet of ours. The rain forests are dying, there are holes in the ozone layer and only 40 breeding pairs of the lesser-spotted crested warbling sparrow remain. It doesn't help that multi-nationals run by evil scientists are pumping chemicals into the atmosphere and are concerned only with making a



***Droid*: take this up the inlet valve, evil noxious chemical factory! Do your bit for the green cause by sending them a 'message' from David Icke**

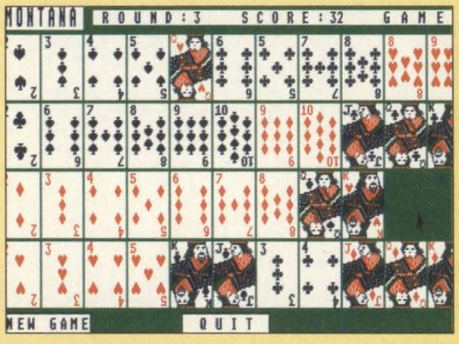
Like playing patience, but just can't resist the temptation to cheat by turning over t

Solo Cards (PD)

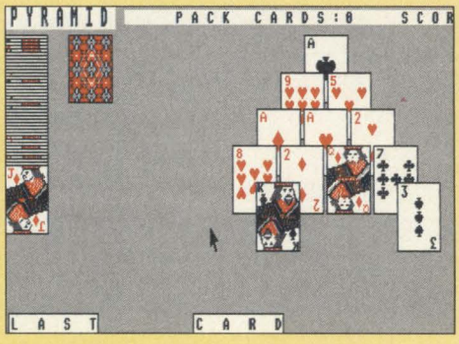
ST • Game 130 • EMPDL
54 Watnall Road, Hucknall, Nottingham NG15 7LE
☎ 0602 630071

The appeal of playing cards by yourself is something I've never quite understood. It strikes me as a game either for those who are very bored as a result of choosing Weston-super-Mare as their holiday location or for people who have difficulty integrating into a social group.

What's even more beyond me is why anyone would want to transfer this to a computer. Two such patience games are on this disk. The first is *Pyramid*. The cards are dealt randomly, with 15 of them dealt face up to form a pyramid of cards. The top card is partially obscured by the two below it, and so on until the bottom line where all five cards are completely visible.



Get as many cards in order with just three rounds to do it in. A bit of a tricky teaser this one, actually



***Pyramid*: whittle down the pyramid of cards in a game that requires absolutely no skill whatsoever**

One other card is dealt face-up and the rest are face-down in a stack. The idea is to get rid of all the cards in the pyramid. If one of the visible cards in the pyramid is one higher or one lower than card on the face-up pile but is a different colour, then you can get rid of it, revealing cards lower down in the pyramid. If not, then you have to take a card from the face-down pile and add it to the face-up pile. And so it goes on.

This game requires absolutely no skill whatsoever. The result of the game is determined by the random distribution of the cards as they're dealt. The programmer could have gone one step further and got rid of the need for the player altogether.

Montana is better. The whole pack is dealt face-up in four rows of 13 cards. The aces are removed and it's your job to sort the whole lot into suits, ascending in order starting from the two at the left to the King at the right. The gaps

quick buck rather than the future of the Earth.

We'll we're going to put a stop to it! Forget petitions to the EEC or a ban on buying their products. There's only one answer: to mount an all-out attack on the chemical plant and blow it to bits with a plutonium mega-cannon.

You're a carbon-fluro-carbon-powered attack droid and have to make your way through the plant, destroying equipment and killing factory workers – the union will have something to say about this. You can fire clouds of noxious chemicals in four directions, which comes in handy for getting difficult-to-reach targets.

The graphics are nothing to write home about, or even jot a quick memo to the boss about, for that matter. It all looks very dark and dingy, and it's not all that clear which of the background features kill you as they all look rather flat and don't stand out particularly well.

The game has been written with the aid of the *Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit*. Basing the game in a factory rather than the further reaches of the galaxy is an interesting twist but it's fairly slow and lacks the excitement of a good blast.

ST 40%

He may be as cute as the girl you sit behind in geography, but *Son of Wilf* suffers from playability quirks that make the game frustrating

Son of Wilf (Licenceware)

Amiga • 1Mb • £3.50 • Déjà Vu • 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

Calamity! The magic forest has been taken over by nasties, and it's up to you to sort out the mess! The beasties are walking around like they own the place and there's no talking to them. They'd sooner push you off a tree as look at you, and so they have to go.

Luckily you have the apples. Not just any old apples, mind, but magic apples that are capable of killing the baddies. But before that you have to blow them up (don't you just love the plot?) which you can do in one of two ways. One, you can shoot them. Two, you can headbutt them a few times. It's a bit tricky, though. The nasties just don't stand still, and it's likely that you'll have to detonate several apples before you score a successful kill. Get rid of all the baddies and you're onto the next level.

The forest is nicely-represented with lots of trees and platform things that you can walk about on. The sprites all have a cutsie look about them, even the nasties, which aren't cute at all, thank you very much for asking. In fact they're rotten to the core. ('Core', geddit? Oh never mind.)

The biggest minus point is that the game is too fiddly. It can be tricky getting on to platforms, which eventually leads to frustration, especially when being pursued by a particularly persistent pest. Killing the nasties is difficult, too. What's wrong with a good, old-fashioned plasma death blaster anyway? With a little bit more care and attention to the movement, this could have been a great little game. As it is, it scores a little above average.

AMIGA 65%

Tank Wars (Shareware)

PC • EGA • Registration fee: $10 • Fantasia Shareware • PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

War is hell – a hell of a lot of fun, that is. There are two of you on the battleground, and one will survive. You sit in gun towers, and take it in turns to blast seven shades of hell out of each other.

The computer generates a hilly background and the heavy artillery is dumped on top of that. Your trajectory

***Tank Wars* has some pretty background screens and graphics in general. Blasting each other into itsy-bitsy pieces is good fun too**

d card or two? Then play on your computer – it won't let you cheat (much)

left by the aces are filled by placing in them cards that have a numerical value of one more than the cards to the left of the gaps. This carries on until there's a King immediately before each gap, then it's impossible to play another card and you go to the next round.

Any sets of cards you've started off (ie, starting with a two at the left and going up in order) are left in place and the rest are shuffled. You have three rounds to complete the task.

This is a lot more fun than the other game as there are always a number of choices open to you at any time. Although the cards are laid out randomly, logic plays a large part in the game as you attempt to work out which cards to move to enable you to carry on playing the longest. As you can see all the cards at the start of the game, those with a brain the size of a planet could theoretically work out all the best moves from the offset. For the rest of us, playing it by ear is the realistic option.

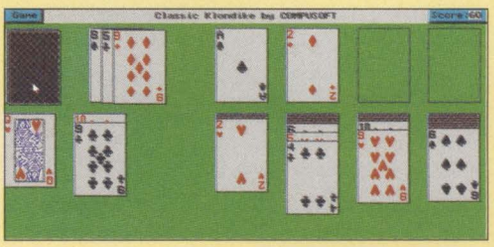
Both games are played in the ST's medium resolution mode, and the cards are well-detailed. Card game freaks will enjoy *Montana*, but *Pyramids* is for the really desperate only.

ST 68%

Solitaire (Shareware)

PC • Registration fee: $15 • SMS Shareware •19 Corshalton Rd, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4AQ ☎ 0246 681864

This is a version of one of the most classic variations of the solitaire theme. The aim is to sort the shuffled cards into four suits. Part of the pack is dealt into seven face-down stacks, the first containing one card the second, two, the third, three and so on up to a stack of seven. The top-most card in each stack is turned over. Cards from the rest of the pack are dealt and you may place any that follow in sequence on top of another card already exposed, as long as it's a different colour. Aces go at the top and when they're in place, you can start building up your suits there.



The oldest (and dullest) card game of them all. It wouldn't be too bad if the program had any extra features

This is all achieved reasonably well on-screen, and you can play the game as easily as you could with a real pack of cards. What the game lacks, though, is any frills. It won't detect if it's impossible for you to make another move, and it can't even tell if you've won. All that's left for you to do is deal again.

If you're that desperate to play patience, you'd be better off buying yourself a pack of cards from the corner shop. Then you can play Snap and Strip Poker, as well.

PC 42%

Up to 10 players can take part in *Tank Wars*. Most have a life expectancy of about 10 seconds

is determined by setting the angle and power. When you think you've got it about right, let loose a shell and see what happens. If it falls short then you know to adjust things for next time round. If you live that long...

It's a fairly simple idea for a game, but there are enough options and variations to keep you interested for a long time. Between bouts of blasting, you can buy more powerful explosives, some of which have very interesting effects, such as eroding the landscape or creating really huge (and quite pretty) explosions. You can have up to 10 players too, any number of which can be computer controlled.

It's best with human opponents, though. And even though you take it in turns to shoot, it gets quite tense as the shots get ever nearer and nearer. It's simple, but jolly good fun!

PC **76%**

VGA Mah Jong

(Shareware)

PC • VGA • Registration fee: $15 • Fantasia Shareware PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

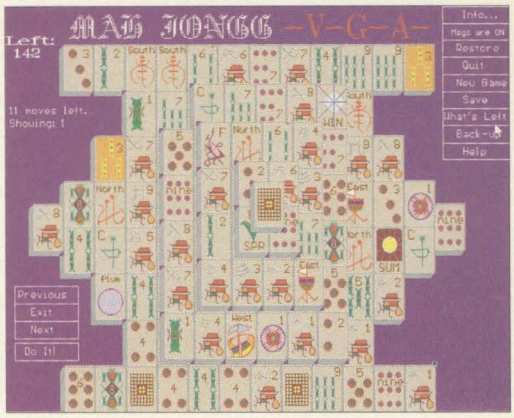
Yet another version of the classic patience game, Chinese style. The idea is to whittle down a stack of tiles until there are no more – or (more likely) as few as possible – left. You do this by taking them away in matching pairs. The rule is that the tiles must be completely visible and you must be able to 'slide' them out freely either to the left or to the right. Simple, eh?

Well, no, not really. The problem lies in that there are four of most types of tile, and while you may be able to see a couple of them clearly, removing them now could get you into trouble later on. So you have to evaluate the safest of your options. A good deal of forward planning is necessary, as you have to decide to take the pair that offers you the greatest selection of tiles to take later in the game.

Being VGA, the graphics are excellently-detailed. There are lots of those neat little features that make playing that little bit easier: if you can't see the tiles for the ivory, you can ask for help and the computer highlights the pairs available; if there's a pair of tiles just begging to be taken, but you're not sure whether there's any others of the same type remaining, then you can call up a screen to tell you what's left; if you've made a catalogue of disastrous moves, then you can step back through them to get back to a more advantageous state of play.

There are plenty of versions of Mah Jong around in the public domain, but this is definitely one of the best. It looks good, is friendly and has enough extras in the way of features to make it worthy of consideration.

PC **78%**



That old classic rears its pretty head once more. And this version has loads of features to make thing easy for you

There are Mongols on the starboard bow... um, doesn't sound right somehow

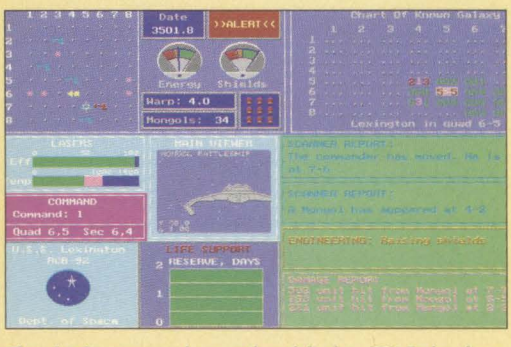
EGA Trek (Shareware)

PC • EGA • Registration fee: $15 • Nildram Software, 26 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks HP7 9BD ☎ 0494 729236

Boldly going where no man has gone before is not on, according to Paramount Pictures, owner of the *Star Trek* name. The movie-making giant has threatened legal action against anyone who uses their name in vain (see News, issue 4).

Which is why shareware author, Nels Anderson, has rewritten his *Star Trek* game, to remove any references to Captain Kirk and co.

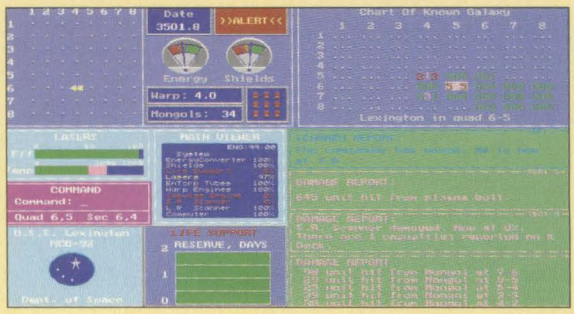
And actually it's a bit of a blessing in disguise because Nels has taken the opportunity to upgrade the game with a whole host of new features. The only major change, though, is in the plot. Instead of wiping out Klingons, it's Mongols that you're waging war against. The Enterprise has become the USS Lexicon. A number of other references have been changed in order to comply with the corporation's wishes.



Though it has very much a text-based display, *EGA Trek* makes for a gripping game that'll have you fighting Mongols for ages

So, this is the new scenario: a Mongol invasion threatens peace in the galaxy. It's up to you and your crew to repel their attack and make space a safe place to hang out in once again. The galaxy is split into 64 quadrants, each split into a further 64 sectors. You cannot rest until every single Mongol has been destroyed.

The control screen may seem a bit bewildering at first. It's divided into several mini-screens providing various bits of information about your ship's status, long- and short-range scans, incoming messages and other pertinent advice. But don't worry – you'll soon get used to interpreting the information in an instant.



Uh-oh, we're under attack again. It doesn't look like we're long for this universe. Defending the galaxy is a dangerous job

The scanners tell you how many enemy ships are in your vicinity, so that you can warp in and wipe them out. It's basically a case of moving round the galaxy and letting off a few lasers and torpedoes. But there's more to it than that. You get urgent messages from starbases under attack and there are planets on to which you can beam a down team to recover vital supplies to fuel your ship.

You type in simple commands to instruct the computer of your movements and where you want to fire photon torpedoes. A Help function tells you what commands are available, should you get in a bit of a fluster.

Though *EGA Trek* isn't an action game as such, time is of the essence and you need to keep a cool head to succeed. And although there's a lot of text, the graphics are plenty pretty enough. It's a gripping game and there are enough difficulty levels to keep you coming back in stardates to come.

PC **82%**

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1011 **Noyes Accounts (1)** - Cashbook/sales/purchase & nom.
1014 **Noyes Cashbooks (1)** - Simple (No VAT). VAT & F. currency
1017 **Page Financial Controller (3)** (HD) - integrated package

BUSINESS

Code Program
1501 **EZ-FORMS (1)** - forms generating & filing program
1503 **Formgen (1)** - create & complete forms
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1511 **Laser Letterhead (1)** - create professional letterheads
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1514 **Purchase Order (1)** - complete purchase order system
1515 **PDS Quotes (1) (HD)** - feature packed quotation system
1516 **EstiBid (5) (HD)** - excellent quotation/bid system
1521 **Marketeer v2.3 (2) (HD)** - sales prospecting/management

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Code Program
2503 **File Express (2)** - powerful easy to use database
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2508 **Zephyr (2) (HD)** - menu-driven relational database
2510 **Membership Database (2)** - ideal for clubs, churches, etc.
2512 **Database Publisher (1)** - a business on a disk!!
2513 **Wampum (2) (HD)** - powerful fast relation database
2515 **Instant Recall (1)** - memory resident free-form database
2517 **Simply Labels (1)** - excellent label generating program
2518 **InfoBASE (1)** - database, forms generator & mail-merge

EDUCATION - Computer

Code Program
3001 **Tutor DOS (4)** - excellent tutorial program
3006 **PC-Tutor (1)** interactive computer tutorial
3009 **C Tutor (2)** - contains both text & source code
3101 **Lotus 123 Tutor (1)** - an adventure game & tutorial
3102 **WordPerfect Tutor (2)** - excellent tutor for ver. 5
3104 **dBase IV Tutor (1)** - 1,000 pages of text + dBase code

EDUCATION - General

Code Program
3101 **PC-Fastype (1)** - good progressive typing tutorial
3204 **Educational Games Disk 1 (1)** - 2 games
3205 **Educational Games Disk 2 (2)** - 18 games
3206 **Word Games (1)** - a selection of word & spelling games
3207 **Word Gallery (1)** - colourful object/association. Age 4-7
3251 **Amy's First Primer (1)** - pre-school early learning
3252 **ABC Fun Keys (1)** - letters, nursery rhymes, colourful
3301 **French Tutor (1)** - 2 good tutorial programs

GRAPHICS PROGRAMS

Code Program
3501 **Draft Choice V1.41 (1)** - easy to use CAD program
3502 **Present (1)** - present your own computer slideshow
3503 **Express Graph (1)** - excellent business graphics
3504 **City Desk V2.0 (1)** - high quality printing from dot matrix
3505 **IMAGE 3D (1)** - 3 dimensional modelling program
3506 **Graphics Workshop (2)** - converts, scales a range of formats
3508 **Flowdraw (2)** - WYSIWYG graphics editor
3601 **Gem Art Disk 1 (1)** - drawing in GEM, IMG format
3611 **Printshop Graphics Disk 1 (1)** - tools, utils & graphics
3621 **Printmaster Graphics Disk 1 (1)** - tools, utils & graphics
3622 **Printmaster Graphics Disk 2 (1)** - as above (more)
3631 **SmartArt Clip Art (IMG) (1)** - 80 images in IMG format

GAMES PROGRAMS

Code Program
4001 **PC Pro Golf V4.2 (1)** - excellent golf game
4002 **Beyond The Titanic (1)** - adventure game

CGA Games
4101 **CGA Games Disk 1 (1)** - 6 arcade style games
4102 **CGA Games Disk 2 (1)** - 7 arcade style games
4103 **CGA Games Disk 3 (1)** - 3 arcade style games
4104 **CGA Games Disk 4 (1)** - 4 arcade style games
4105 **CGA Games Disk 5 (1)** - 3 arcade style games
4112 **Ford Simulator (1)** - test drive Fords cars. Good!
4113 **Bushido (1)** - colourful, well produced Karate game
4121 **Pinball Games Disk 1 (1)** - a selection of pin tables

EGA Games
4201 **EGA Games Disk 1 (1)** - Mah Jongg & Wheel of Misfortune
4202 **EGA Games Disk 2 (1)** - Breakout, Risk & Triskellion
4211 **Mah-Jongg (2)** - uses full capability of EGA graphics
4213 **Blackjack (1)** - excellent program, good graphics

VGA Games
4301 **VGA Games Disk 1 (1)** - Army & Bananoid
4302 **VGA Games Disk 2 (1)** - Miner, VGA Fish, Risk & Tunnel
4311 **Las Vegas Casion (1)** - stunning graphics
4312 **What is it? (1)** - a guessing game for the whole family

LEISURE

Code Program
4501 **Home Budget Management System (1)** - good home budget
4503 **Talk/Musician (1)** - make your computer talk & play
4505 **Check Book Charlie V2.01** - Good cheque book manager
4901 **On Line BIBLE V3 (6)** - King James Bible with search etc
4702 **Family Tree V1.25 (1)** - interesting genealogy program

GENERAL

Code Program
5001 **PC Prompt (1)** - memory resident DOS prompt
5002 **PC Demo (1)** - make demonstrations, tutorial etc.
5003 **Early Bird V1.0 (1)** - a good diary/reminder program
5004 **Quick Personal Accounting Sys (1)** - quick & easy
5005 **Football Forecast V3.0 (1)** - increase your odds!

SPREADSHEET

Code Program
6001 **As Easy As (1)** - popular 123 style spreadsheet
6002 **PC-Calc Plus (3)** - popular spreadsheet from Buttonware
6005 **Freecalc (1)** - ideal spreadsheet for beginners
6006 **InstaCalc V2.0 (1)** - memory resident pop-up spreadsheet

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Code Program
7001 **PKZIP (PKZ110) (1)** - fast, effective archiver/de-archiver
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7501 **Automenu (1)** - a comprehensive menuing program
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7602 **LQ V2.34 (2)** - letter quality printing & much more
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WORD PROCESSING

Code Program
8002 **PC Write LIte (2)** - ideal for beginners includes tutor
8007 **PC Type Plus (3)** - includes on-line help & spell check
8011 **Multi-Lingual Word Processor (1)** - covers 11 languages
8017 **Galaxy V3** - easy to use, fast with spell check & manual
8018 **PC Write V2.7 (2)** - popular shareware word processor
8020 **Freeword (1)** - easy to use menu driven word processor
8401 **PC Outline V3.35 (1)** - excellent outliner & editor

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PC

❶ Commander Keen 4 — Issue 3 — 96%

PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

The second series of *Commander Keen* games. Can you save the galaxy single-handedly? Great graphics and loads of surprises.

❷ Duke Nukem — Issue 2 — 94%

PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

Huge platform game. Enter the evil dictator's fortress and teach him a lesson he'll never forget. Plenty of things to see and destroy.

❸ Paganitzu — Issue 4 — 92%

PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES

Multi-level all-action thrills inside a pyramid. Collect diamonds and avoid venom-spitting snakes. Great graphics, great puzzles.

❹ Hugo's House of Horrors — Issue 1 — 92%

Classic Shareware, 23 Fieldhead Close, Ponefract WF8 2ED ☎ 0977 794876

Brilliantly funny adventure game where your animated character mimics your actions on-screen as you type them in. He walks, he talks and he dies a lot too.

❺ Monuments of Mars — Issue 2 — 88%

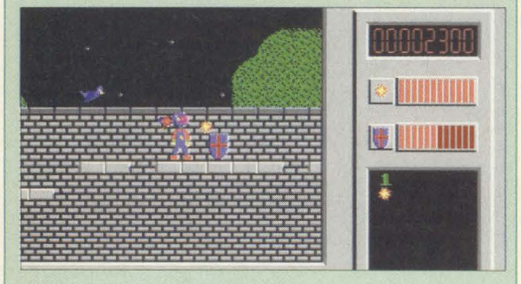
PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

Arcade game set on the red planet that's packed with puzzles. You'll die plenty, but there's unlimited lives so you can keep on going for ever...

❻ Captain Comic — Issue 2 — 85%

Eigen PD, PO Box 722, Swindon SN2 6YB ☎ 0793 611270

This is one big game. Your superpowers are limited, but there are lots of things to pick up to make them better. Cartoon graphics add to the atmosphere.



Try not to fall off the bottom of the screen in *Captain Comic*

❼ Ground Wars — Issue 1 — 85%

Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

Two-player warfare game based in the Gulf. You have to take apart your opponent's tanks and military targets before they do the same to you.

❽ Crystal Caves — Issue 4 — 84%

Shareware Marketing, 3a Queen Street, Seaton, Devon ☎ 0297 24088

You have to visit several diamond-rich planets and stuff your pockets with jewels while avoiding loads of nasties. Good graphics and well-defined sprites.

❾ Joust — Issue 1 — 83%

Academy Software, PO Box 65, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 8YZ ☎ 0227 360808

The classic game where you're sat astride giant birds and have to dismount your enemies by knocking them off from a greater height. Addiction factor 10!

❿ Jumpman Lives — Issue 2 — 80%

PSA, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts SG8 0ES ☎ 0767 23302

Not that hot to look at – in fact the graphics are archaic – but pick up that joystick (or keyboard) and you won't be putting it down for a while!

ST

❶ Llamatron — Issue 1 — 96%

Llamasoft, 489 Mount Pleasant, Tadley, Hants

Manic blast with hundreds of levels and even more llamas! Kill all manner of unlikely enemies to progress through the levels. It's weird, wacky and, quite simply, wonderful!

❷ Ozone — Issue 3 — 94%

Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650

Brilliant-looking arcade game with playability to match. Can you get your round-but-cute blob to the exit safely? Oh-so-cute graphics complement the gameplay.

***Ozone*: hang-glide your blobby character to safety**

❸ Douglas Rockmoor — Issue 1 — 91%

LAPD, 80 Lee Lane, Langley, Heanor, Derbys DE7 7HN ☎ 0773 761944

Boulderdash clone that's more fun than Christmas. It's slightly spoiled by slow scrolling that doesn't keep up with the action, but what the heck, it's fun!

❹ Penguins — Issue 4 — 90%

Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650

A mixture between *Pipemania* and *Lemmings*, you have to guide hapless penguins to the exit by dropping obstacles or bridges in their path.

❺ The Mystic Well — Issue 2 — 88%

30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

Dare you dare the depths of *The Mystic Well*? 3D hack 'n' slash game, in the style of the full-priced classic *Dungeon Master*, that will keep you going for ages.

❻ Dizzy Lizzy 2 – A Winter's Tale — Issue 4 — 86%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness ☎ 0463 225736

A Boulderdash-esque puzzle game where you have to control a small round blob – the eponymous hero – and find crackers, pressies and Christmas pud.

❼ Revenge of the Mutant Camels — Issue 4 — 84%

Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

The latest creation from weirdo Jeff Minter, *Mutant Camels* is an all action romp very much in the blast-everything vein of *Llamatron*.

❽ Valgus² — Issue 2 — 84%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

Tetris takes on a new edge, well, four edges, actually. Played around a central square, the blocks fall towards the centre of the screen. You form rings instead of lines.

❾ Robotz — Issue 1 — 84%

Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester Kent ME2 3QB

Robotz have taken over your spaceship. Looks like you'll have to kill them all then. Very pretty-looking game, but not really as frantic as it could be.

❿ Wortris — Issue 1 — 78%

Michael Andersson Tjärdalsgränd 11, 18341 Täbx, Sweden

Cream of the crop of the *Tetris* clones. It's pretty much a straight copy of the classic, but that's not a bad thing – it means it has plenty of playability.

Amiga

❶ Llamatron — Issue 1 — 96%

Llamasoft, 489 Mount Pleasant, Tadley, Hants

The classic ST game is also available on the Amiga. Blast coke cans, telephones, toilets and stranger things with your death-spitting llama.

❷ Hypnotic Land — Issue 2 — 94%

Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 7AA

Put the correct-coloured balls into the right cups as they roll down a conveyor belt. Starts off easy, but soon gets very tricky indeed. It's bodacious, dudes!

❸ Super Amidash — Issue 2 — 94%

Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Holybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680

Boulderdash clone that has everything the original had and a lot more to boot. A lot of the levels are the same, but there's plenty of new ones to challenge you. Unmissable!

❹ Cabaret Asteroids — Issue 1 — 90%

Software Expressions, Hebron House, Soin, Bedminster, Bristol ☎ 0272 637634

Carbon copy of possibly one of the finest arcade games ever. Blast the rocks to pieces or they'll do the same to you. More playabilty than many more modern games.

❺ Amigoids — Issue 1 — 90%

Software Expressions, Hebron House, Soin, Bedminster, Bristol ☎ 0272 637634

Another *Asteroids* clone. Just as playable but with souped-up graphics and a few new twists. The only problem is: which one do you choose?

❻ Cyad — Issue 1 — 90%

Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancashire WN6 7AA

Not technically brilliant, but it's one of those games that just works. Gobble all the diamonds on the screen to complete the levels.

❼ Seven Tiles — Issue 1 — 90%

NBS, 132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5LH ☎ 0983 529594

Fast and furious footie sim set in the next century. Pretty much ignores all the rules of conventional soccer, which is probably why it works so well.

❽ Cubulus — Issue 1 — 88%

NBS, 132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5LH ☎ 0983 529594

Puzzle game based on the Rubik's Cube. Get all the 'faces' the same colour and you've cracked it. A tricky teaser that'll torment you!

❾ Bug Bash — Issue 1 — 88%

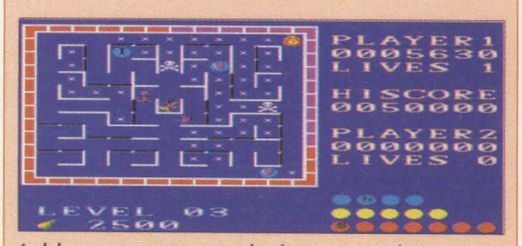
Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Holybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680

Picking up litter can actually be fun as *Bug Bash* proves. Tidy up the garden, but watch out for the over-sized insects. Very good looker with mega-cute graphics.

❿ Ladybug — Issue 3 — 85%

Slave PD, 4a Luffmen Road, Lee, London SE12 9SX ☎ 081-851 8082

Roam around the maze, eat the grub but watch you don't end up as the main course!



***Ladybug*: try not to get eaten by the creepy-crawlies**

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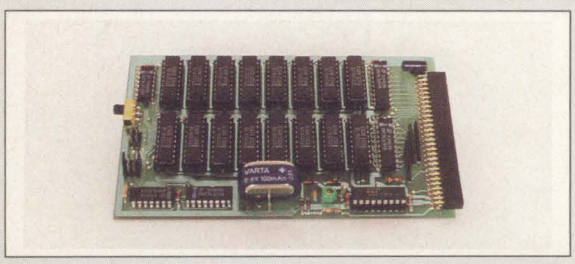

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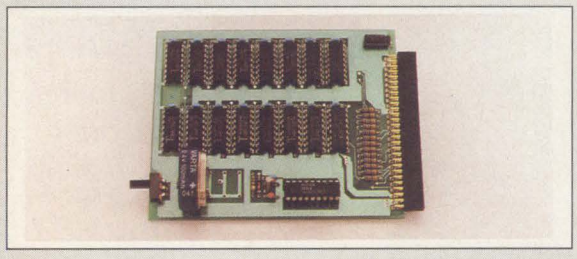

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Smashing Windows

Amigas have Workbench, STs have GEM and what do PCs have? The world's unfriendliest computer interface – MS-DOS. Windows was designed to make the PC more inviting to use and PD programmers have been quick to take full advantage of its capabilities. Jason Saunders graphically describes what's available...

There's one really annoying thing about owning a PC. When you've managed to get it out of the three boxes it comes in, then spent a couple of hours working out where all the cables go and eventually find the 'on' switch, what are you presented with? The dreaded DOS prompt – `C:\>`.

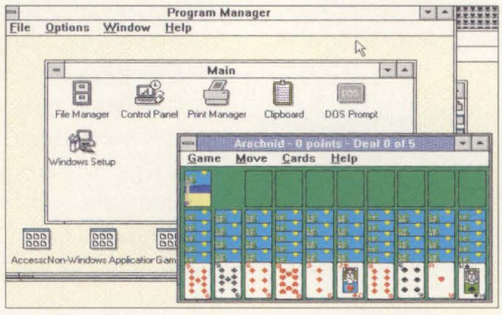
If you had bought an Amiga or an ST, on the other hand, after switching on, you would be presented with a screen with an arrow, or cursor, on it. Move the accompanying mouse and the cursor moves accordingly. Press the buttons on the mouse when the cursor is positioned over one of the little pictures on the screen, the 'icons', and things start to happen. All quite simple, and to a large extent, intuitive; it invites you to learn how to use the computer by experimentation.

When a PC user wants to use a program, however, they have to change directory and enter the program name. Plus, all this has to be carried out by typing in often complex command lines on the keyboard.

The thing is, getting started on an Amiga or an ST is a darned sight easier than starting out on a PC. Before you get anything out of your PC, you have to learn about the CD command and executable files, whereas Amiga and ST owners only have to work out how to work a mouse.

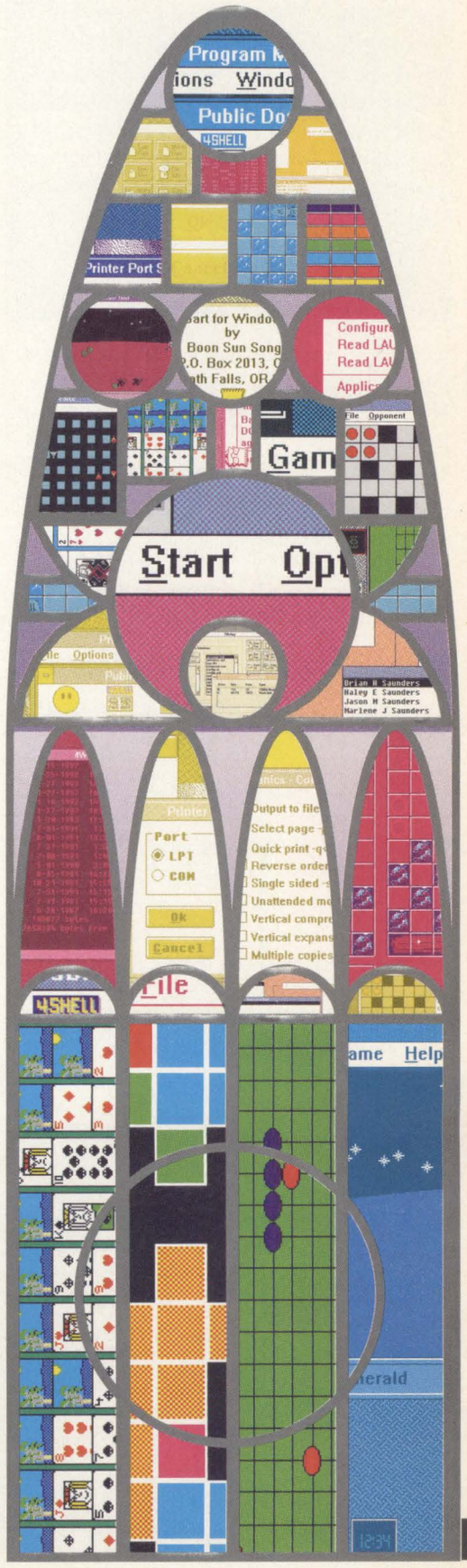
Windows to the rescue

This may sound very negative and make you think there's no point using a PC if they're so unfriendly. But help is at hand in the form of Microsoft Windows. This wondrous program transforms a PC from an attention-seeking keyboard-dependent horror into a brightly-coloured user-friendly tool.



Here it is! Windows, the environment that's turned the PC from a mystifying machine that requires you to type in gobbledy-gook on a command line to a friendly, mouse-controlled personal computer

Windows is the PC's most popular Graphic User Interface (GUI) and has sold over six million copies in the United States alone. The



So just what is the secret of Windows' success?

Windows isn't the only GUI for the PC. ST users are used to the GEM environment, and this was tried out on the PC. There even exists a GUI that is remarkable in its similarity to Windows, but doesn't require such a high spec machine – GeoWorks' *Ensemble*.

These programs never really took off, and it all boils down to one thing. Windows got there first. As soon as people realised that Windows could actually make their PC easy to use (previously unheard of) it was open season on Microsoft's sales department. Now there are literally millions of PCs throughout the world using the program and compatible software. When *Ensemble* was released, there was no compatible software around, and no-one was willing to make any commitment to change the situation.

GEM, similarly, never made its mark, as it was deemed too unfriendly and didn't live up to the PC's capabilities. How this decision was reached is hard to tell, as the ST is hardly an under-achiever.

That's not to say that these are the only forms of GUI for the PC. They are just the most common Program Managers. GUIs take many forms; if you have ever used a graphics program, you will have encountered one. Such packages require you to click on little pictures to carry out certain tasks. Windows is much the same, only it is capable of doing this in more than just a simple paint package.

cont. p5

Windows shopping

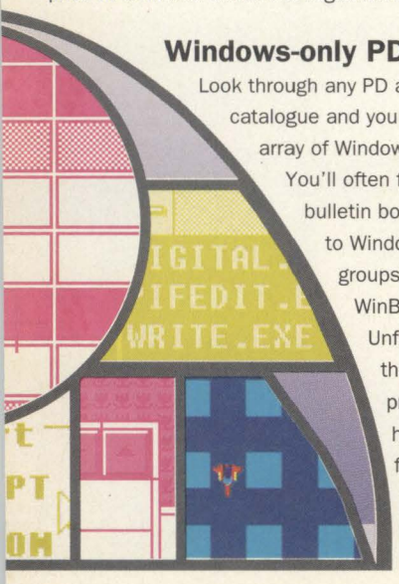
It's bad luck for all of us PD and shareware freaks, but Windows is a commercial package owned by one of the biggest software houses in the world – Microsoft. This means that if you want it, you're going to have to buy it. And worst of all, it isn't cheap (though it is bundled with some PCs). If you want to use the programs that are mentioned here you have to shell out £99 plus VAT (though shopping around might throw up some bargains). Alternatively, you can buy the Microsoft mouse which scored 85 per cent in our mouse round-up in issue three bundled with Windows for £150. So if you want to join in on the Windows PD and shareware scene and have the money knocking about in a shoe-box under your bed, contact Text 100 on 0734-500741. If only they'd release it as shareware!

primary function of the program is to make using PC programs easier. This is achieved by using a 'point and click' interface. The term 'point and click' makes the operation sound more technical than it really is. All it means is that the user simply points at a small picture representing a program or a function and clicks on a mouse button to activate it.

Because Windows is so easy to use, a plethora of commercial programs have been developed to run under it. These programs vary from word processors

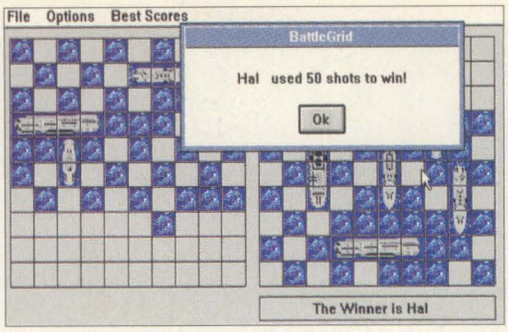
"Games are one type of program where PD and shareware really knocks the spots off commercial software for Windows."

to games. Unfortunately these programs rarely start from under £40. But not to be deterred, there are also 1,001 PD and shareware programs that use Windows. Just because they're PD, doesn't mean they're any worse than their commercial counterparts. In fact, in many cases these programs often prove to be a hell of a lot better, and all for the price of a disk or a minimal registration fee.



Windows-only PD

Look through any PD and shareware catalogue and you will find a vast array of Windows programs. You'll often find areas on bulletin boards dedicated to Windows user groups, such as WinBase. Unfortunately, in the past programmers have had one fixation with this program environment. They seem to think, "Hang on a second, if they're using Windows then they must have a mouse. I'll have to write a Missile Command game". It's true that to get the most out of Windows, you should have a mouse, but the fixation with this ten-year-old game soon becomes a tad boring. Thankfully, there are programmers out there that have grown out of this stage and have written great games, wonderful utilities and astounding applications.



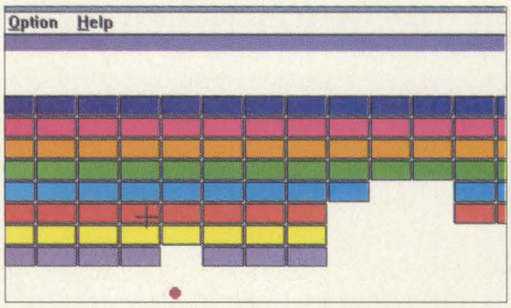
There are plenty of old favourites in the way of games. *BattleGrid* gives you the chance to play *Battleships* against HAL-9000 when you've had enough of the spreadsheets

Getting your hands on a Windows PD or shareware program means that you can do everything from play games like *Battleships* to restoring archived files with a few simple mouse movements and clicks. Before tracking these programs down you should take note that they generally come in the form of shareware (as with everything almost else in the PC world). Even so, you can still get your hands on a brilliant game or an indispensable utility for a fraction of the cost of a commercial product.

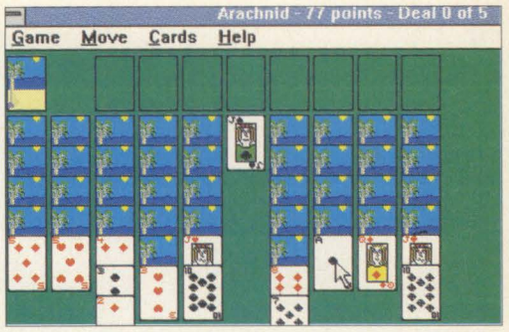
GAMES

This is the one area where PD and shareware knock spots off all commercial software for Windows. There are practically no commercial games available for Windows other than the *Solitaire* game that comes as standard with the Windows disks.

Many PC users seem to regard Windows as a purely business and serious computing package. As the majority of PD and shareware authors are creating these programs for their own enjoyment, they destroy this reputation that Windows has so unfairly obtained. True, there are tons of serious



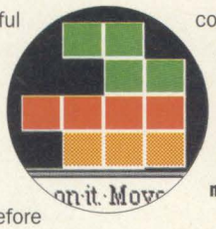
***Breakout* is given a new lease of life with *Block Break*. Best of all you get to control the speed at which the paddle moves so no more frantic blister-developing key pressing**



Card players have loads of games to choose from in Windows including virtually every variation of patience. One word of warning: if you play them at work, expect productivity to fall

programs out there for Windows, but its user-friendly environment means that games created for Windows are simple to play and extremely addictive.

Some games are old favourites that have been given a new twist like the *Battleships* variant *BattleGrid*, which enables you to play against such auspicious opponents as HAL-9000, the computer from the film *2001 – A Space Odyssey*. The game itself may be very



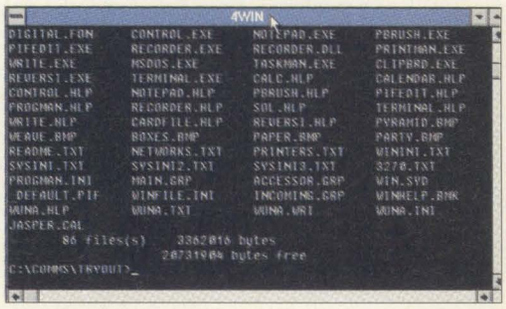
There's only one advantage of running *Tetris* variations under Windows – click on the program that's running in the background and the boss will never know what you've been up to

familiar but it's working out your opponent's tactics that makes this particular program so addictive.

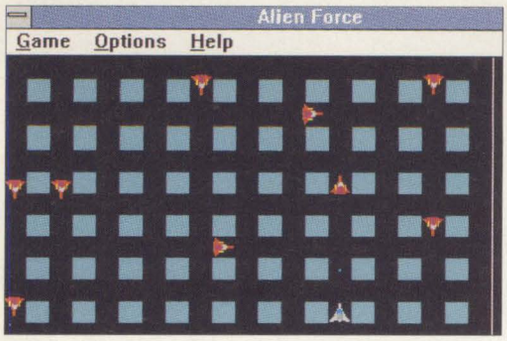
If you're a Windows-using card games fanatic, then you are going to be spoilt for choice. There is a current trend for variations of patience. The great thing about these games is the fact that they are ideally suited to the point and click environment.

You'll also find games out there that are more than a little familiar. Anyone who owns a computer or has ever sat in a pub knows about the best-selling Russian game, *Tetris*. Just when you thought it was safe to open your spreadsheet, they go and make a version for Windows. It doesn't play any better, but there is one advantage. If you are constantly being caught playing this highly addictive game at work, running it under Windows means that you could have another program running in the background. Then, should the boss leap around the corner, all you have to do is click on one of the other applications you have running and look angelic.

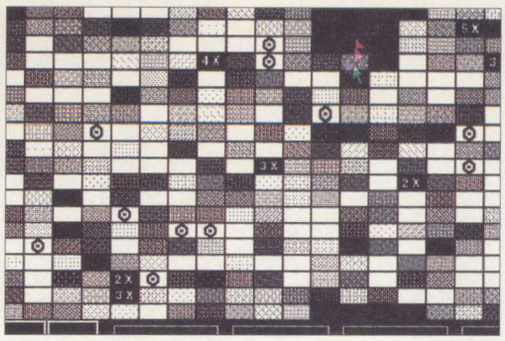
Carrying on the theme of old games, you can



***4Win* enables the user to mess about in DOS without having to exit Windows or use the slow DOS Prompt option. It's also handy for those fiddly commands too difficult to carry out in Windows**



Just because you're running Windows without a mouse doesn't mean that you can't get shareware games for your system. *Alien Force* only uses the keys but is still brilliantly addictive



This is no more than a game to exercise your mouse skills and reflexes. Simply point your cursor over the targets and double click to destroy them as fast as possible

also lay hands on *Breakout* games. These definitely benefit from the employment of Windows. Because you control the bat with your mouse, it means that you can vary the speed at which you move it. All too often with the original game, you'd end up cursing the cursor keys because you didn't stand a chance of moving the bat at the speed required.

UTILITIES

There are utilities available for Windows that simply make life a hell of a lot easier. For example, as soon as any PC user enters the PD and shareware scene, they run into archived files – these have been compressed to fit on to a disk and have to be decompressed, or dearchived, before you can use them. If you have a degree in mathematics and the technical know-how of Charles Babbage, the DOS commands you have to type to restore these files shouldn't pose any problem. If, however, you're the same as I was when I bought my first PC, as soon as you see a file with the letters ZIP or ARC after them, you'll probably be tempted to fling the disk in the bin.

Utilities such as *Windows UnArchive* make restoring files a dream. All you have to do with this program is click on a couple of on-screen buttons to run the program. There is also a rather wonderful function that shows the author has a lot of experience in restoring files. How many times have you gone to the hassle of restoring a file and found that you hate the program? When this happens you end up spending ages deleting the files you have just laboriously restored. With *Windows UnArchive*, all you do is click on a button that says Try Out. This option gives you the chance to run the program before committing yourself to keeping the files. Should you hate the program, then you just click on the Kill It button and it disappears, or should you like it then just click on the Move It button.

Windows might be a godsend, but it does have its flaws. There are certain parts of the program that could be improved. One such area is the infamous File Manager. If you ever use this program-within-a-program to delete files, the screen constantly updates, making the process painfully slow. Because of this there are programs such as *4Shell*, which is a cross between the Windows File Manager and DOS 5.0's DOS Shell. This shows files in a way that resembles the way in which you would open or save a file in any Windows application. Because of this, the screen does not have to update to such a great extent and speeds up all forms of file operations.

> *"Many people are put off using Windows because they don't have a 386-based machine... once again PD and shareware programmers have leapt to the rescue."*

Many people are put off using Windows because they don't have a 386-based machine. But once again PD and shareware programmers have leapt to the rescue. Take the example of printing a document on a 386-based machine and on a 286 machine. The 386 user will be able to carry on with other things on their PC, thanks to a Windows function called 386-enhanced Mode. The 286 user on the other hand has to wait until the computer has printed. But with the aid of *Dumper*, the poor old 286 user can put his machine through its paces and rival the 386. This marvellous program by-passes Windows Print Manager and enables lower specification computers to get on with other tasks while printing.

If you have any experience of Windows, you will undoubtedly have had to return to the DOS prompt to carry out some fiddly command that seems next to impossible in Windows. OK, you can use the trusted DOS Prompt icon to temporarily abandon Windows, but it is a bit irritating. Using a utility such as *4Shell* can alleviate this unnecessary aggravation by placing a new window on the screen in which you can type in conventional DOS commands. Many people will argue that they can't see a use for this program, but it's the same as the majority of small utilities — you could cope before you found it, but as soon as it's installed, you wonder how you ever lived without it.

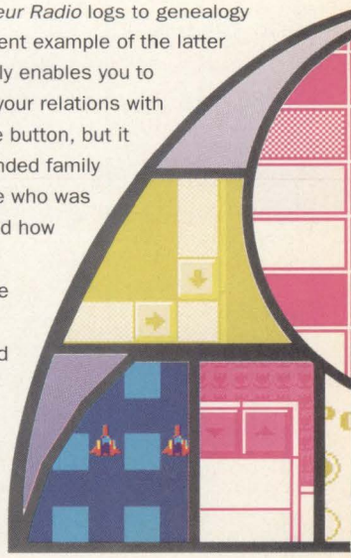
What you'll need

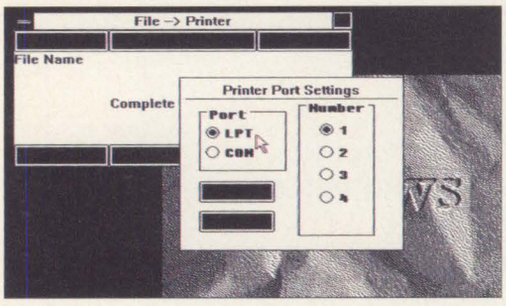
Windows doesn't work on any old PC that happens to be lying about. There are machine restrictions with the current version (Windows 3.0). You might as well forget about Windows if you own an XT. The lowest specification of machine it will work on is an AT 268-based PC with a hard drive. If you're lucky enough to own a 386 machine with 2Mb of RAM, then you're laughing. On these machines you can run Windows in 386 enhanced mode which is capable of doing things that make the majority of computers pale in comparison, and you can view DOS programs and Windows programs at the same time in separate windows.

The only other thing that your PC should have, although it is not essential, is a mouse. You can run the majority of Windows programs from the keyboard, but on the whole, life's a lot easier with a mouse.

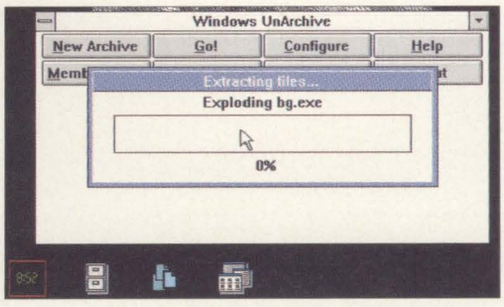
APPLICATIONS

There are tools to suit all tastes when it comes to Windows PD and shareware. Everything is covered, from *Amateur Radio* logs to genealogy programs. An excellent example of the latter is *Parents*. It not only enables you to store details on all your relations with the click of a mouse button, but it can display an extended family tree, so you can see who was married to whom and how many times. It also enables you to make brief notes on that person, so you could feasibly keep track of their criminal record or when they decided they were a confirmed alcoholic. PD





***Parents* is an excellent genealogy program that uses the point and click environment to its best advantage so you can drop names into the correct slot in your family tree**



With the aid of *Windows UnArchive* restoring and testing compressed files, the bane of so many new Windows-less PC users, soon becomes a hassle-free affair

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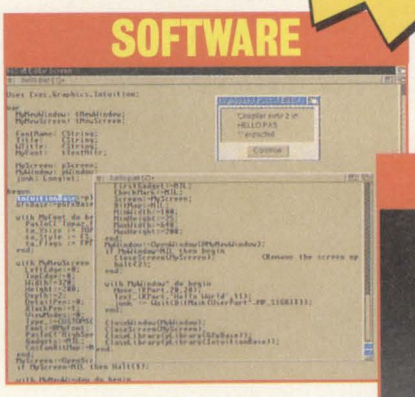

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Ami-Back (PD)

Amiga • Plus compatible • Hard drive required • 17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

As a business or serious user, you simply couldn't get along without 20Mb or more of hard disk drive hanging off your machine, right? A single floppy may be OK for the games players, but when it comes to storing massive amounts of personal data, a big hard 'un is the only solution.

Unfortunately, although you require serious tools to do a serious job, getting them to work correctly is not always all that it could be. The emphasis is on the word 'tool' – you use a pencil too, but you don't wanna know how they get the lead into it, am I right? So you practically have to be dragged to your desk in order to make those essential monthly back-ups of that outrageously valuable data hurtling around at 3,600 revolutions per minute.

Well now you can breath a much-needed sigh of relief. *Ami-Back* is an automatic back-up program providing executive relief to hard disk owners the world over!

Ami-Back operates under a sophisticated Workbench 2.0-like interface so you don't need to be a computer scientist to use it. The program runs as a background task backing up all or selected parts of your hard drive to any AmigaDOS compatible devices such as floppy drives, SCSI tape drives, removable media hard drives and so on.

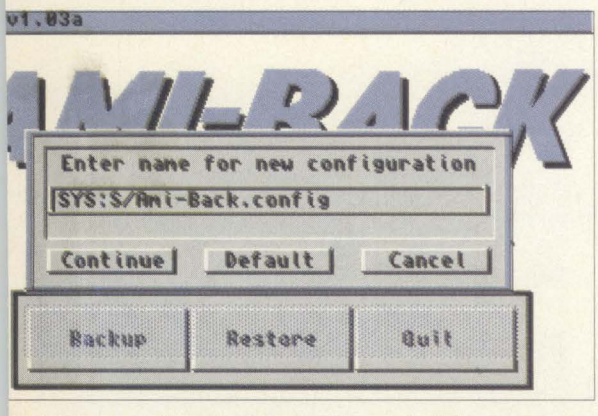
But what makes it really special is that it can be instructed to back-up data without the need for human intervention. That is, you can instruct it to work in the middle of the night on the 30th of every month. Come that date, *Ami-Back* will do its stuff completely independently. You'll simply arrive at the office the next day to find a neatly backed-up hard drive awaiting you.

This is similar to expensive PC back-up software such as that provided with Everex tape streamers and the like, and if it's good enough for the unsophisticated old PC, then it's certainly good enough for you!

The program will also make intelligent back-ups of data, or, in other words, it will select only those files which have been modified, or those which were created after a stipulated date. In addition, *Ami-Back* checks for duplicate data, and can be set to exclude specific items next time round.

Yeah, the subject's a techie one, but make no mistake, you definitely need a back-up program – and *Ami-Back*'s the one you need.

AMIGA 75%

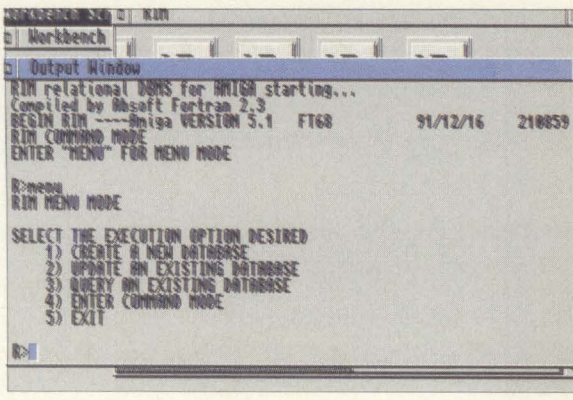


Maybe it is unpleasant to think about, but as a hard drive owner, you owe it to yourself to get hold of a copy of *Ami-Back*

RIM-5 (PD)

Amiga • Plus compatible • George Thompson Services Ltd Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB
☎ 0707 664654

Sometimes it seems like there just isn't a decent database for the Amiga.



***RIM-5*: for a database it looks crude, sure, but there's amazing power available in the mini-menu if only you can learn to tap it**

Sure, there are plenty of AMOS-generated pretenders to the throne, but most have fancy front-ends frantically attempting to cover up feeble features, and trusting your valuable data to them makes about as much sense as *Twin Peaks*. All that glitters isn't gold...

RIM-5 is a database.

RIM-5 is a database developed by

NASA, Boeing and the most influential computer science departments of American universities (OK, so they have the average academic levels of a European nursery school, but stay with it, willya?)

RIM-5 is a relational database management system which offers data manipulation power only dreamed of until its port to the Amiga.

And *RIM-5* has a suitably sinister-sounding sci-fi name – what more could you ask of a database?

Tomorrow's World stuff aside, *RIM* is an acronym for Relational Information Management, and the program is a port of the immensely popular (in academia) *RIM-4* database previously available for the VAX. *RIM-5* is the 300K Fortran-compiled Amiga version of same.

Of course, with such power, you can't expect simply to double-click its icon on the Workbench and start hacking in data. Rather, *RIM* provides the tools for you to define a database of your own devising, and therein lies its power. Instead of being restricted to an application's way of organising data, you decide how it's all organised – anything which can be described by you can be catalogued by *RIM*.

You'll pay dearly for the privilege of using the program. Not in pounds and pence of course, but in the sheer hard work setting it up. But if you get there, well, suffice it to say that you won't need another database for a long, long time. *Rim-5* is definitely not a program for the computer novice.

AMIGA 45%

Finance Manager II

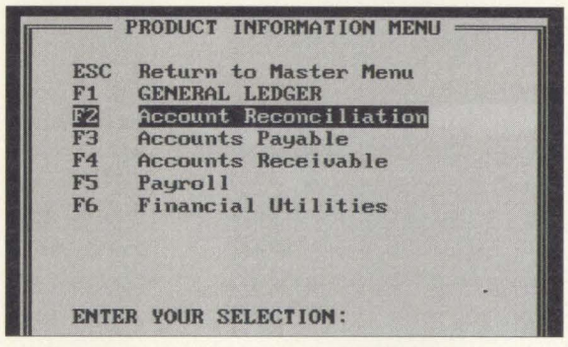
(Shareware)

PC • 640K • EGA/CGA • Hard drive required • Registration fee: $45 • Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

Just when you thought that the PC market must surely be saturated with the things, up pops yet another comprehensive small business accounting package vying for your attention and shareware shekels.

Just where *are* all these small businesses? Surely most of them have gone *out* of business in these days of high interest, and those that are left would probably plump for voluntary receivership rather than the ignominy of evaluating yet another package aimed at taking care of their financial affairs. Yet *still* the big business of providing small businesses with buck-counters lumbers ever on.

Finance Manager II is the latest monster be-moduled electronic accounting system consisting of everything you need to cope with dwindling funds, spiralling loans and mysteriously mounting tax demands. And if that sounds like a cop-out, suffice to say that to list the program's modules would require more paper than it's possible to staple in one go. Let's just say then, that they include ones for general ledger, account reconciliation, accounts payable/receivable and payrolls as well as a stack of other financial utilities that would choke a donkey.



A fully-working set of demo data accompanies *Financial Manager*, so it's easy to test and configure. Ideal for small businesses

Each of the modules comprises a comprehensive collection of whatever it is accountants use to flummox you and the Inland Revenue with, and each can be bought separately from the program's author, Hooper International, for a nominal sum – you need never buy anything without use.

Finance Manager II looks good, but it's not for the newcomer to financial matters and requires the cash-knowledgeable among you to determine true worth.

PC 80%

Post (PD)

Amiga • Plus compatible • 512K • Valley PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091-587 1195

A lot of people have a lot of problems with printing. Even ordinary, everyday dot matrix machines and drivers leave lots of business users reeling, and when it comes to anything with laser and object-orientated outline stuff, well, why not just sit down and have a nice soothing cup of tea?

PostScript is especially problematic. It enables you to print out nice, curly fonts as opposed to blocky, bitmapped ones which is all well and good, but usually your computer is unable to display these fonts accurately on-screen. Yet it *is* possible to make use of PostScript files without suffering the technological side-

cont p5

An interactive experience without ever having to access the Desktop...

The Guru (Shareware)

ST • 512K • Registration fee: £10 • WoolleySoft, Humblesknowe Cottage, Ramoyle, Dunblane, Perthshire, Scotland FK15 0BA

Dedicated readers (you, right?) will surely remember Scots shareware outfit WoolleySoft and its marvellous hypermedia attempt *HYPE!*, put through its silicon paces in *Public Domain*'s maiden issue. Scoring a healthy 65 per cent, our only real complaint was a distinct lack of situations wherein *HYPE!* could become a viable solution. Now however, even that slight criticism has been undone – *HYPE!* just got useful...

These stout fellows of Caledonia don't spend their evenings rolling an oat or two for breakfast porridge, I can tell you. Incensed by what they probably perceived as a serious snub of some pretty superior software, Mr Woolley and his sporran-swinging crew retired to a Highland backroom and came up with *The Guru*, a splendid desktop accessory version of their original attempt at hypermedia.

That's right, the amazing *Guru* is now available from within any application which conforms to the GEM standard. And what that equates to is practically every serious package ever written.

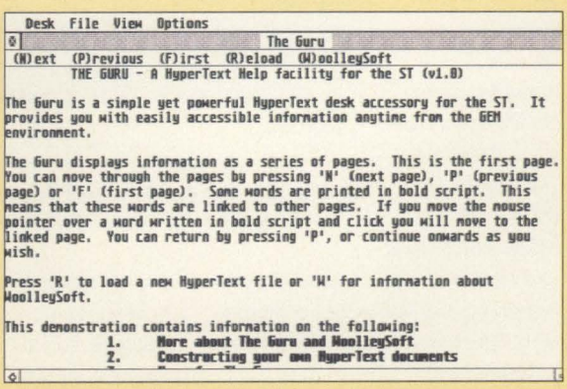
Think about it. At any time, from any application, you can summon an interactive hypermedia experience featuring specialised script geared towards helping, informing or simply entertaining you.

Stacks (the grist to a hypermedia mill...) can be generated using any word processor capable of producing an ASCII file. A stack is a bit like a card file system in which all the cards are linked by a similar theme. There are already a growing number of stacks available from PD sources, and Woolleysoft actively encourages you to generate more, by offering to cut the registration fee in half if you send a stack larger than 20K to them – a really positive step towards software acceptance from a shareware coding house, and a gesture which can only be highly commended.

There's a similar hypermedia help 'package' doing the rounds on Stateside bulletin boards at the moment, but it has to be included with an application's code at programming time, and it's aimed at the PC. The Woolleysoft offering is application-independent, far superior and available for a registration fee of £10.

ST hypermedia has finally come of age...

ST 85%


Desk File View Options
The Guru
(N)ext (P)revious (F)irst (R)eload (W)oolleySoft
THE GURU - A HyperText Help facility for the ST (v1.0)
The Guru is a simple yet powerful HyperText desk accessory for the ST. It provides you with easily accessible information anytime from the GEM environment.
The Guru displays information as a series of pages. This is the first page. You can move through the pages by pressing 'N' (next page), 'P' (previous page) or 'F' (first page). Some words are printed in bold script. This means that these words are linked to other pages. If you move the mouse pointer over a word written in bold script and click you will move to the linked page. You can return by pressing 'P', or continue onwards as you wish.
Press 'R' to load a new HyperText file or 'W' for information about WoolleySoft.
This demonstration contains information on the following:
1. More about The Guru and WoolleySoft
2. Constructing your own HyperText documents

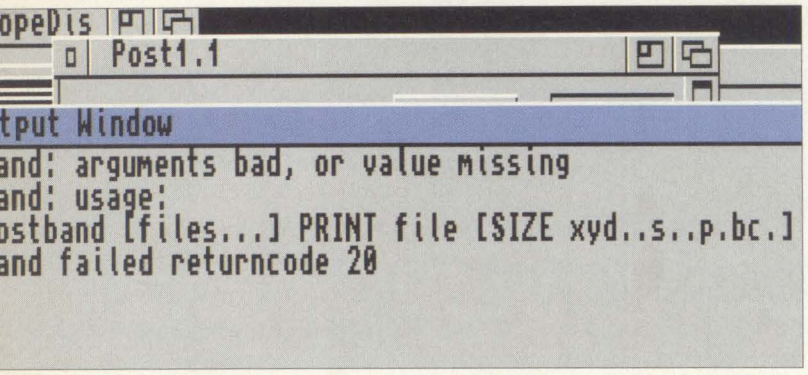
***Guru*: a permanently on-line interactive experience available from the DA (Desk Accessories) menu. ST multimedia comes of age**

effects. And to do it, what you need is a copy of *Post* by Adrian Aylward.

Post is a software-based PostScript interpreter. Using a simple command line interface (CLI), you present the program with a suitable file (it can handle up to five at once) which it processes and prints as a graphic dump. Alternatively, *Post* will save the processed results as an IFF file or display it directly on-screen.

Post will also run from a Workbench icon. Double-click, the screen clears and a requester for the process filename appears. From then on in, operation is the same. Just the kind of simple little software ditty most computers are crying out for.

AMIGA 70%



Although accompanied by a crude command line interface, *Post*, a PostScript interpreter for the Amiga so that you can produce some fancy printing, does supply details if you go wrong...

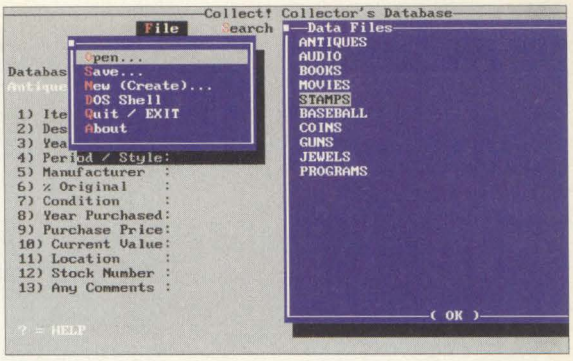
Collect! (Shareware)

PC • 640K • MDA/VGA • Registration fee: £29.95 • The Thompson Partnership, Church Croft, Bramshall, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire
☎ 0889 564601

"We're gonna build the biggest goddamn shareware library Uttoxeter's ever seen!" must've been the cry when the Thompson Partnership got started. Today, the industrious software supplier distributes some of the prettiest pieces of PC software around, and *Collect!* rates amongst the best of them.

Billed as the program which can, "...intelligently manage *any* type of collection", *Collect!* has a hell of a reputation to live up to. Fortunately, for its authors, distributors *and* Uttoxeter, the program pulls through with reputation to spare!

But first, let's deal with that *'anything'* claim. Maybe I'm getting just the tiniest bit long in the tooth, but every database program I've ever reviewed was perfectly capable of dealing with *any* type of information. Shoelaces to silicon implants, the data manipulator under review took it on the chin. I mean, if it didn't, it wouldn't be much of a database, right?



A pop-up list of other *Collect!* databases is always on hand, and you can switch between them at the merest press of a key

Dubious claims aside, *Collect!* can manipulate my beer mat and stamp haul any day. An excellent drop-down menu front-end provides efficient access into a program simply dripping with features. There's mouse support too, so you don't have to scratch the patina off your QWERTY keys to summon said menus.

Relational searches and statistical analysis of fields ensure that all data is well and truly correlated. On-line help will see you through sticky moments and the nine flavours of sample data get you up and running in no time.

One really nice feature is the ability to define fields *not* to print. That is, if a field sports sensitive data, you can elect not to print it, thereby saving it from possible prying eyes.

Not exactly a belter, but it blows away the likes of *Amibase Pro* and costs just under thirty quid. What more could you ask?

PC 65%

DataEasy (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Plus compatible • 17-Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX
☎ 0924 366982

If your fingers have to be forced to the keyboard to get you to type, if set-up operations give you a spasm, if bubble sorting makes you blench, *DataEasy* is an information-cruncher hand-crafted for you!

Menu-driven throughout, *DataEasy* rarely requires more than a simple click before belching out more data than a half dozen editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

The program opens with a neat little options box in the centre of the screen. Functions include making a new database or opening an existing one, quitting or summoning help. Choose the first option, the screen clears and you're prompted for a name. Following that painless process, there's field creation facilitated by mouse clicks, functions keys and more buttons than Concorde flight deck.

Like the promise in its name, databasing was *never* easier than with

Cut-down classic makes for a very limited finance manager

Personal Finance Manager (Bannerware)

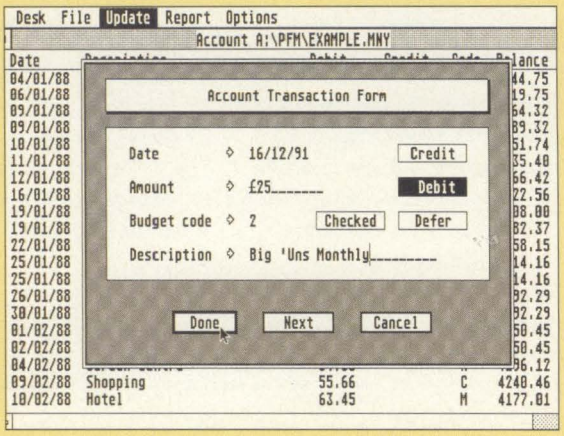
ST • Exmoor Software, Queen Street, Lynton, North Devon

A slightly cut-down PD version of the once-popular personal poke-bag controller from Michtron, *Personal Finance Manger* features a delectable front-end designed to ease you into the swing of electronic accounts keeping.

Almost invariably for home and small business budgeteers, it's far easier to keep track of fiscal ups and downs via pencil and paper – Uncle Clive's early 80s dream of computer-controlled *everything* simply doesn't make sense for most users. But with *Personal Finance Manager*'s aforementioned decent Desktop interface, computer accounting becomes an attractive proposition.

The program features fully GEM-based bank account debit and credit posting, credit card tracking, automatic uncleared transaction reminders and some dead good report generation.

There is, however, an almost irretrievable fly in the accounting ointment. *Personal Finance Manager* is limited to 30 transactions, and two standing orders. Those of you attempting to make ends meet on DSS hand-outs may find the cut-down quota covers your needs, but an income which aspires to anything greater than a stale crust per week will need the commercial version (wash out your mouth with soap!).



Limited features mean the PD version of *Personal Finance Manager* is but a stepping-stone to the commercially available 'real' thing

The PD version of *Personal Finance Manager* does, however, provide an interesting insight into the program proper – you get to try before you buy – and there's an on-disk tutorial too. But don't expect to be able to do anything useful with it.

ST 35%

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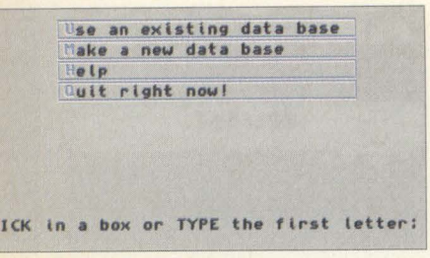
VISA



More buttons than a Cadbury's ad and lashings of function keys make *DataEasy* one of the simplest databases available for the Amiga

t. from 58

DataEasy. Virtually everything you could ever wish for is on offer including comprehensive searching and sorting facilities, exhaustive report printing, extensive index generation and, as they say, much, much more to make databasing a pleasure.

DataEasy makes heavy use of novice-friendly features such as the Amiga's built-in speech ability and friendly prompt language to put you completely at ease, and the expansive on-line help files ensure that there's never a lost moment – even for the most hard-bitten novice.

Even the experts among you will warm to what is one of the speediest collection cataloguers around. Simple it may be, but the program is never patronising, and there's as much or as little help as you require. And the source code is available for $12 (about £7) for those with programming leanings. Excellent.

AMIGA **90%**

Mail-Pro (Shareware)

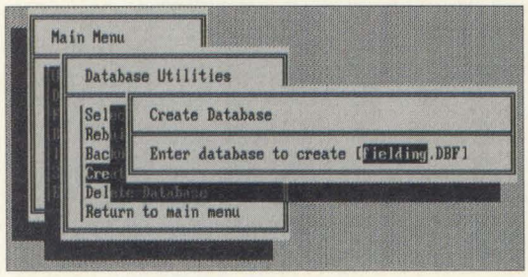
PC • 512K • CGA • Hard drive required • Registration fee: £50 • Wessex Systems, 108 Ensbury Park Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH9 2SL ☎ 0202 546466

Here's the kind of database I like: simple (preferably non-existent) set-up, free-form data entry, filters for mail-shots, label printing, built-in quality text editing – basically, unlimited *everything*, and TSR operation to boot. But it's all too much to ask for, right?

Not with the advent of *Mail-Pro* it isn't! The program is based on that faithful old office stand-by, the card index – and it really is as easy to use. A series of overlaying pop-up menus guide you through creating and naming a new database. After that, just hack in the data. No fields to worry about, you can type anything and everything on to each 'card', and at any time add another, or search for and edit any existing cards by selecting the relevant option from the main menu.

An exceptionally pretty screen fronts a program which is powerful yet manageable. *Mail-Pro* will create as many databases as the Ks on your hard drive will allow and theoretically, can store up to a million records!

Installing it as a TSR (a Terminate and Stay Resident program, which means that if you quit out of *Mail-Pro* it stays in the computer's memory and can be recalled at the press of a couple of keys) involves no more than specifying the default hard drive and memory configuration from a 'system parameters' pop-up menu within the



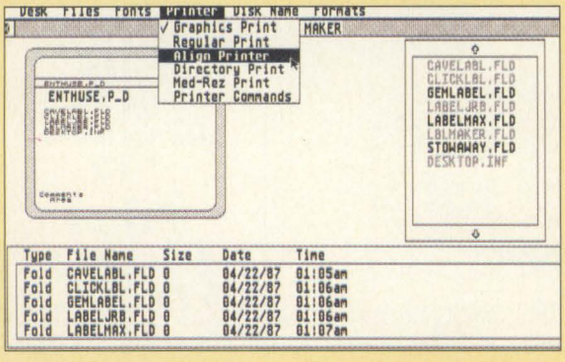
***Mail Pro*: isn't that pretty? Jinky menus abound and the program's many excellent features overlay one another on-screen without compromising clarity. A pleasure to use**

Customise your stationery – a brace of label printers put through their inky paces

Label Maker (Shareware)

ST • ACC 52 • 512K • Registration fee: discretionary • Softville, Unit 5, Elettra Avenue, Stratfield Park, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7XN

Stalwarts of the software world, label-printing programs are almost invariably turned out by silicon-struck kids with Christmas-pressie compilers looking for something to program.



One of the best disk label printing programs around, and definitely the prettiest. On-screen representations ease the creation process

And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, believe me. Because while the professionals write yet another over-complex, 'definitive' word processor, the rest of us can enjoy the exquisite pleasure of turning out a few thousand address labels for a mailshot or disk labels for a PD library, automatically, without a whit of human intervention!

Label Maker has got to be one of the most thoughtful disk-labellers around. The program simply drips with front-end features designed to simplify the process of label production.

Labels are created in an on-screen graphic representation. Pull down the File menu and select Disk. All devices connected to your machine are displayed. Choose a device, *Label Maker* reads the directory and displays it across the bottom of the screen, complete with date and file size information. A list of the programs on the disk is also displayed at the right of the screen. Select those whose names you want to appear on the label by clicking them – it's as simple as that! Each time you click, another name appears on the 'label' at the left of the screen.

There's space for a title which is perfect for customising labels with the name of a PD library, software house, shop or what have you. Labels can be printed in several typestyles including italic and bold, and you can include *Degas*-compatible graphics as well. Other features include test printing for label alignment, a comments field on the label, name sorting and a variety of border styles.

Of its type, *Label Maker* is an exceptional program, and a pleasure to use.

ST **75%**

GEM Label (PD)

ST • 512K • Disk ME99 • Merton PD, 10 Grasmere Avenue, London SW19 3DX

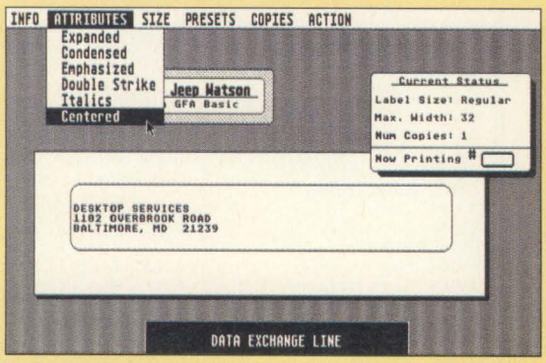
If you've previously resorted to addressing mailshots by hand (or even by work experience kids...), you'll be aware of the drudgery involved. Not to mention the hefty expense of buying ball-point pens, or bandages for the sprained hands of your government-supplied teenage charges. But now there's *GEM Label* designed to take the tedium out of label typing.

Like *Label Maker*, *GEM Label* provides an on-screen graphical representation of a label, but the latter's sticky medium is orientated towards address labels rather than those for floppy disks. That is, the program can be used to generate mailing labels in one of three supplied sizes (or you can buy the source code and hints for twenty bucks and customise to your requirements).

You can choose from a range of typestyles including expanded, condensed and emphasised as well as the ubiquitous italics although there is no graphics facility. Naturally, the program will perform print tests for label alignment.

All that, and the program was authored by a guy with the extremely unlikely name of Jeep Watson! Funky features and funny names, what more could you ask for?

ST **60%**



Written by the outrageous Jeep Watson, *GEM Label* is nonetheless a usable label printer for the small businesses

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Each print example was produced by the printer it is shown with. Printer speeds are quoted as follows:
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324 CPS 80 COLUMN
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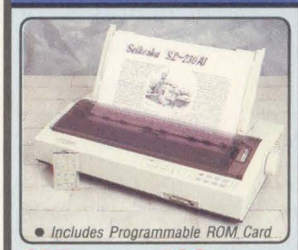

- *Includes Programmable ROM Card*

277 CPS 136 COLUMN
- *Seikosha SL-230 - 24 pin - 136 col*
- *277cps Draft, 92cps LQ*
- *5K Printer Buffer + 9 Fonts*
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- *Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
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£449
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462 CPS 136 COLUMN
- *Seikosha BP-5500 - 8 pin - 136 col*
- *462cps Draft, 106cps NLQ*
- *18K Printer Buffer*
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- *Graphics Resolution: 240×144dpi*
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520 CPS 136 COLUMN
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Company Name (if applicable): .....

Address: .....

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Tel (Home): ..... Tel (Work): .....

Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 58D

E&OE - Advertised prices and specifications may change - Please return the coupon for the latest information.

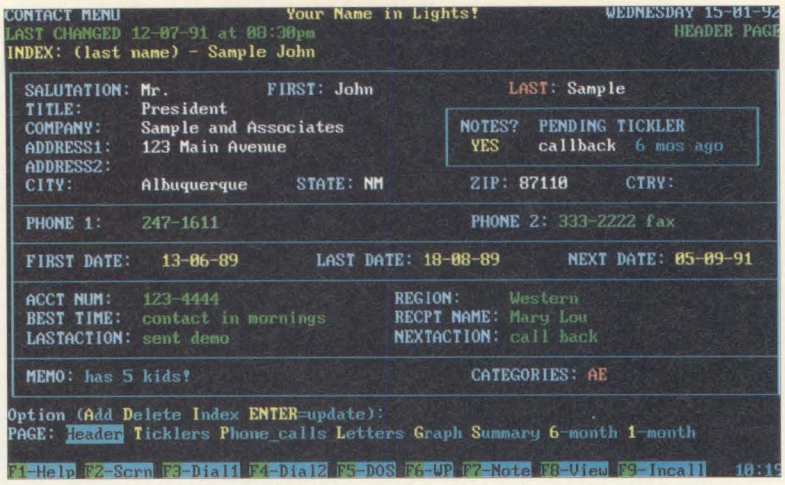
program. You can then summon *Mail-Pro* whenever you want with a CTRL-F10 keystroke.

All that, and when it's dished up the dirt on every snippet of information dear to your heart, *Mail-Pro* plays the meanest game of *'Mario* this side of a Sega Megadrive.

Wow! *Really?*

Nah, I'm lying, but it *is* an excellent database. Bung fifty quid the Wessex way, before Microsoft buys out the company...

PC 85%



***Contacts Plus*: cluttered? You'd better believe it, but there's so much power to be tapped that getting to grips with the admittedly confusing front-end is well worth the trouble**

Contacts Plus (Shareware)

PC • 512K CGA • Registration fee: $79 •Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

If you're an aficionado of black and white films from the 30s and 40s, you've almost certainly seen a Rolodex in action. Jack Lemmon uses one constantly in *The Apartment* (Um, that was made in 1960 actually, Jerry – Ed). Uninterested in old movies? Then let me explain. A Rolodex looks rather like a shredded loo roll held on a desk-based metal frame. The roll – naturally enough – revolves, and each shred, ie card, is used to store an address and telephone number.

Basically then, it's a revolving cylindrical contacts list. And guess what? An electronic version just became available for your favourite PC.

But unlike the severely limited metallic original, *Contacts Plus* stores a comprehensive history for all your contacts. Names, addresses, telephones numbers sure, but in addition, complete details of when you last called them, when they last called you, what happened, schedules detailing when you should call again and a lot more.

Everything is available from single key presses. For example, if a prospect should telephone, you can log the call while they are still on the line by pressing F9 and selecting their name. You can seek out anyone in the database using their forename, surname, or two user-defined indexed fields. Contacts can be classified using any of supplied 24 categories (an additional six are available to be customised...), autodialled with an attached Hayes-compatible modem and mailed out using the built-in form letters.

There's access to the system at any time (including the ability to run independent applications), and you can return to *Contacts Plus* by typing 'exit' at the DOS prompt. Record numbers are limited only by your on-line storage capacity, but expect around 200 from a single 3.5-inch floppy.

But wait, there's more! An on-line word processor (*MicroStar* – guess what it looks like!), mouse support and a novel screen-grabbing feature compete the package.

Lacking the nostalgic charm of its mechanical ancestor perhaps, but infinitely more efficient and adaptable. And yours for a registration fee of $79 (around £40). Get it.

PC 85%

PrintPartner (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA • Registration Fee: $45 • Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

Not another boring pin-matrix pacifier for print-poor PCers, but a dinky little utility designed to squeeze an extra slice of usefulness from the dear old dot matrix on your desktop.

Until now, many such devices existed solely to reproduce hard copy generated by your applications – when not working with *AutoCAD*, *Ventura* or *WordStar*, the average Epson-compatible sat around burning up electricity lighting 'Ready To Print' LEDs. But boot *PrintPartner*, and the way is clear to create stunning signs and banners, just right for the small business person. That, at least, is the

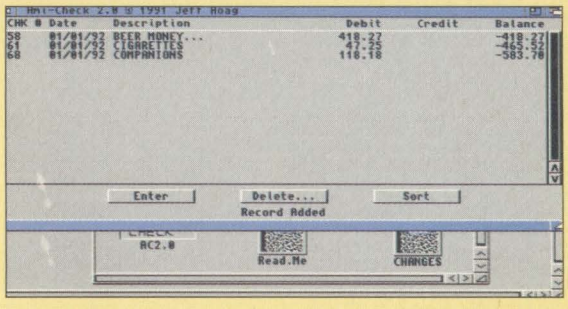
Keep check on your cheques – financial flim-flammery from across the Atlantic!

Ami-Check 2.0 (Shareware)

Amiga • 512K • Workbench 2.0 • Registration fee $25 • Amiganuts United PD Library, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southhampton ☎ 0703 785680

The Americans, or so the cliché goes, like to do things big – very BIG. Not for them the piddling programs necessary for small-time financial manipulation. Our Stateside cousins want it all bold, brassy and bubbling over with bells and whistles.

Back in the mid-80s, Florida-born Jeff Hoag was bowled over by a neat little chequebook balancer known as *CheckBook 128* (blame the spelling on the Yanks). Written by a chum, the program used the best of the features of his Commodore 128 to provide simple monetary manipulation. When Ma Hoag's little boy upgraded to an Amiga he, "...looked forward to an even better [chequebook program], utilising the superior graphics, multitasking, GUI, mouse and memory of the Amiga." The boy Jeff taught himself C, and the rest, as they say, is application history.



One of the first shareware applications directly supporting Workbench 2, *Ami-Check* is Jeff Hoag's culmination of a lifetime banking dream

What this means for you , is a blank cheque 'register', with running totals, auto-dating, cheque numbering and balancing, and an on-line calculator featuring full memory functions and data integration with the chequebook program.

Type in each day's cheque transactions, enter a pertinent description and total your cheques, comparing the results with the bank's statement.

One nice feature is the flow-tracker. This enables you to track spending by totalling previously-defined cheque categories, comparing the results and printing comprehensive reports. There's no excuse for being skint ever again.

In addition, the program is accompanied by extensive documentation. Unfortunately, it's incredibly badly written in parts, containing such confused gems as, "in the meantime I had been slowly in my spare time teaching myself C". It's the electronic prose equivalent of a Mozart piano sonata performed by Les Dawson.

Not only that, but the guy drops names faster than a starlet on Steven Speilberg's lap. It's all, "...while talking to my good friend Timm (*SID*) Martin..." or, "...during lunch with Gorbachev and Bush recently, I...". Typically transatlantic, it's definitely not for the faint of heart or frail of stomach.

OK, so it's smooth and it does, pretty much what it sets out to do, but it's a little over-rated (mainly by its author) and frankly, the Amiga seems an awful lot of computer for such an itty-bitty slice of code, especially one that carries a hefty $25 (£14) registration fee. Carry on keeping those stubs.

AMIGA 50%

Pfennigs or escudos? Which to invest in? Your ST could have the answer...

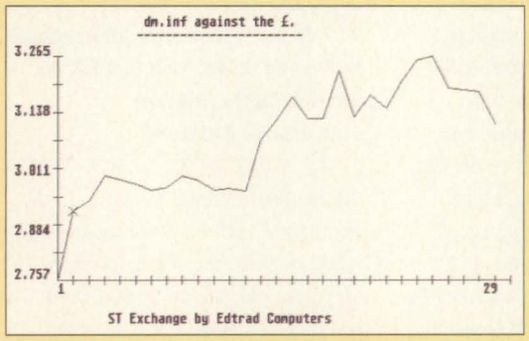
ST Exchange (PD)

ST • 512K • Goodman's International, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 1SW

The only prerequisite for getting a job in the money markets is an all-encompassing greed that'd make Genghis Khan look like a playground pilferer of other kids' sweets.

But even these guys are outdone in the economic domination stakes. Those who like their risks big don't even bother to buy and sell stocks in order to turn a profit, they go straight for the mazuma.

Crinkle, cabbage, hard currency, call it what you will, the big boys (...and yes, it's an almost exclusively male domain) buy it cheap from countries on the slide, and sell it big to those for whom currency means credibility. That is, they buy foreign gelt with a poor exchange quotients (Polish zloties, Australian dollars and the like), gambling on the fact that the exchange rate fluctuates, sometimes dramatically. If it fluctuates in their favour, massive profits ensue.



Manipulate the money markets with ease using a standard ST and *Exchange*. Fully-featured financial tomfoolery only a click away...

Now – and don't you just know what's coming – it's possible to use your ST to examine the likelihood of favourable fluctuations. *ST Exchange* amasses exchange rate data in order to find interesting little oscillations. You hack in the current state of the monetary markets, and *Exchange* tells you which currency to buy and sell. .....You see, it's like this. Any operation based on statistics works far better when bunged into a half meg of silicon. The ST can find correlations you wouldn't discover in a million years, enabling you to play the market at just the right time.

The program features a simple menu front-end, featuring a series of options selected by entering an associated number on the keyboard. From this, it's easy to update the currency database or produce on-screen graphic plots showing what's going up and what's coming down.

As the program comes, all operations are based on pounds sterling, but you can easily adapt the program for a different base currency so that you can work out whether dollars or francs look like a good bet that week.

It may not make your fortune, but any weighting in your favour has got to be good news, right?

ST **65%**

theory. In practice, what you get are a handful of Mickey Mouse fonts with some custom smoothing routines, printer drivers for a range of pin-matrix machines (and the HP Laserjet series) and a bit of picture editing.

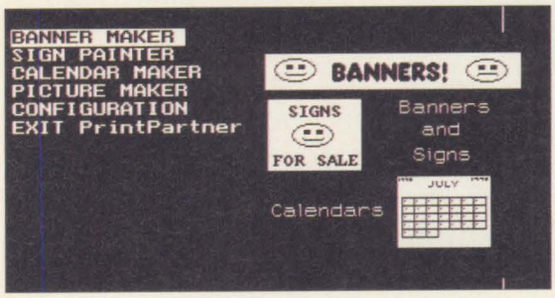
To be fair, *PrintPartner* certainly works as advertised. It does indeed generate signs, banners, calendars and the like, it's simple to use and fits the bill as far as a program of this scope can. But why do I get the feeling that even the largest businesses will be reduced in status by the addition of ugly dot matrix-generated posters adorning what might otherwise be an attractive window display? There's a tradition in the UK for those fat-lettered 'green-grocer' placards hand painted by skilled sign-writers, and *PrintPartner* ain't gonna give *those* guys any sleepless nights.

While reading a Computer Science degree, some of the students on my course discovered how to get a Unix-based PDP11 to print posters. Soon, custom locker banners were all the rage.

Jeez, were we *tedious*...

At $45, *PrintPartner* provides the same kind of slushy student-prank signs. Fine for those whose graphical compositions look like they were generated by a pissed Rolf Harris sporting a broken arm, but otherwise, forget it.

PC **55%**



Ruin any chance of trapping potential customers into gazing in at your goods by displaying a banner generated with *PrintPartner* in your window. Better stick to crayons and sugar paper...

Attendx (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA • Registration fee: $5 • Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

Here's an interesting little snippet for all those whose business it is to mind other people's. *Attendx* consists of electronic employee snooper software designed to log the nefarious activities and otherwise of your wayward staff.

That is, *Attendx* stores and maintains a catalogue of your employees' attendance records, alerting you to layabouts, and highlighting the girly-swots who always arrive on time and stay after hours for free.

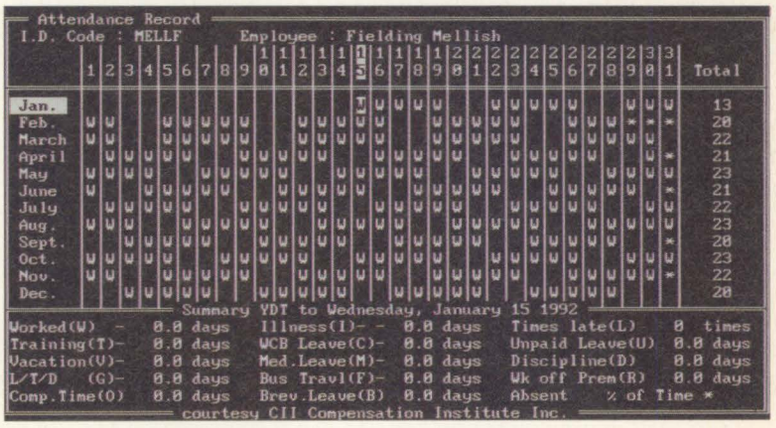
Using the program couldn't be easier. Boot it from DOS, and wang in the names of your employees. *Attendx* provides a series of easily-assimilated code letters which denote whether an employee worked a whole day, half day, didn't work at all, and so on. Individual records can be dumped to a printer direct from screen, or the entire database printed.

This latter option provides a complete picture of the relative attendance habits of your work force. Weeding out the swots is then a simple matter of noting their names and firing them at the earliest opportunity (the 'free-spirits' are always more creative, intelligent, attractive and able to meet performance quotients when asked – my, ahem, theory at least...)

Apparently, the already nominal five buck charge for the software is merely to get you a leap year-cognisant update. Otherwise, and as stated in the on-disk docs, the program is free for everyone.

An excellent, off-beat fragment for worried employers everywhere.

PC **80%**



***Attendx*: a simple system of code letters enables you to track the comings and goings of any employee. Comprehensive report printing completes the package**

ProMATHeus (Shareware)

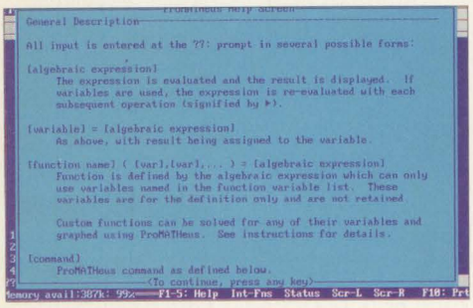
PC • 512K • CGA • Registration fee: $15 • Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

Didja ever see such a stupid name? Generated by self-confessed frustrated mathematician-cum-actuary Mark D. Brissman, *ProMATHeus* is intended as a logical replacement for your calculator and spreadsheet.

Apparently, or so the number-whizz asserts, spreadsheets and

cont p6

computer-based calculators have in-built limitations owing to the mechanics of the software – the nondescript numbers of the former (!), and cell-based logic of the latter. Well, that's gone and trashed twenty years or so worth of productivity software. What next?


General Description
All input is entered at the ??: prompt in several possible forms:
[algebraic expression]
The expression is evaluated and the result is displayed. If variables are used, the expression is re-evaluated with each subsequent operation (signified by ▶).
[variable] = [algebraic expression]
As above, with result being assigned to the variable.
[function name] ([var],[var],...) = [algebraic expression]
Function is defined by the algebraic expression which can only use variables named in the function variable list. These variables are for the definition only and are not retained.
Custom functions can be solved for any of their variables and graphed using ProMATHeus. See instructions for details.
[command]
ProMATHeus command as defined below.
<To continue, press any key>
F1-S: Help Int-Fns Status Scr-L Scr-R F10: Prt

***ProMATHeus*: an ugly screen disguises a program that can only be described as not for those of a number-nervous disposition. On-line help may get you out of trouble...**

To answer that you have to boot *ProMATHeus*. Do so, and you're regaled with a more-or-less blank screen containing an inverse screen-width cursor and several menu options along the bottom. To perform a calculation, type its numbers into the inverse bar and press return. The screen scrolls a line and the equation together with its solution is printed above the cursor. It's similar to those slightly more expensive accounts calculators which print equations and results on a little till-type roll of paper as you tap in the numbers.

That's simple calculation out of the way, but where *ProMATHeus* supposedly stands out from the crowd, is in its ability to accept user-defined functions, applying them to the numbers of your choice. What that equates to is that those with special needs – such as scientists, actuaries, navigators and so on – can define the functions which meet their requirements and so perform calculations without fuss. In practice, of course, it's all way above the heads of anyone without a Master's in mathematics or of genetic descent from Einstein.

Full of glib sentences such as the ability to, "...shape easily, to fit the computational needs of each individual", the *ProMATHeus* docs constantly push the program's abilities. Sounds like a crock, right? Appropriately, our man Mark codes under the software house pseudonym of *Blarney Stone* Software...

Snide comments aside, it appears to be just the piece of code that the mathematician-about-town has been searching for. But the makers of *SuperCalc* aren't going to be worried enough to start rewriting their cell-based baby just yet, even if at $15 (or $25) for *ProMATHeus Plus* it is a good deal cheaper.

PC **55%**

Spell (PD)

ST • 512K • Goodmans International, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 1SW

Specifically intended for use with the excellent *ST Writer*, *Spell* provides the missing spell-checking function for which the much-used freebie word processor is crying out.

The program puts up a fully-featured GEM front-end, featuring menu options to scan through the dictionary (useful for locating synonyms), correct misspelt words and check a file for errors.

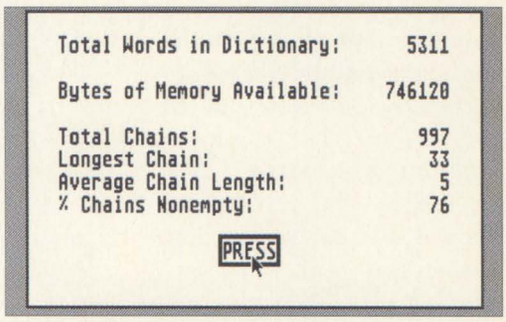
Basically, then, it's a spell checker, and the only real questions when evaluating such a program are how fast is it, and how big is the dictionary?

And (in order of asking) the answers are: very fast and minuscule. That is, the program wades through reams of text like a hot cliché through butter, but the dictionary contains a poorly-presented 5,000 words – hardly enough to cover the eventualities in a laundry list.

Fortunately, as each 'misspelt' word is located, *Spell* offers you the chance to include it in the dictionary so that as you use the program, the dictionary continually grows, eventually creating a customised lexicon of your favourite words.

Still can't help feeling that spell checkers are far more efficient when operating as DAs (Desk Accessories – thereby enabling you to use them from within the word processor), but of its type, *Spell* is a proficient program, and worthy of disk space.

ST **55%**



Only a lousy 5,000 words in the dictionary, but adding more is a simple process, and *Spell* is super-fast!

Who's doing what? Where does that go? Let your PC do the organising

Task-Pro (Shareware)

PC • 512K • CGA • Registration fee: $59.95 • Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871

The idea behind *Task-Pro* is that the day-to-day running of all businesses relies on a series of tasks – some performed by you, some by employees. Tasks have priorities, deadlines and relative difficulties.

Unfortunately, because said tasks tend to be scribbled down on the back of a fag packet as and when they occur to you, they're often assigned to the wrong people or forgotten altogether! How many times have you assigned a particularly difficult sales mission to the janitor, while your star performer sweeps out the stock cupboard?

Enter *Task-Pro*. Florida-based Business Technologies examined the problem and came up with this aptly-named application. What it does is to enable you to store, organise and maintain a breakdown and schedule of all the jobs associated with your business. Each task can be stored in a unique 'folder', or you can lump them together into related group folders. These folders provide a clear picture of exactly what is required and when.

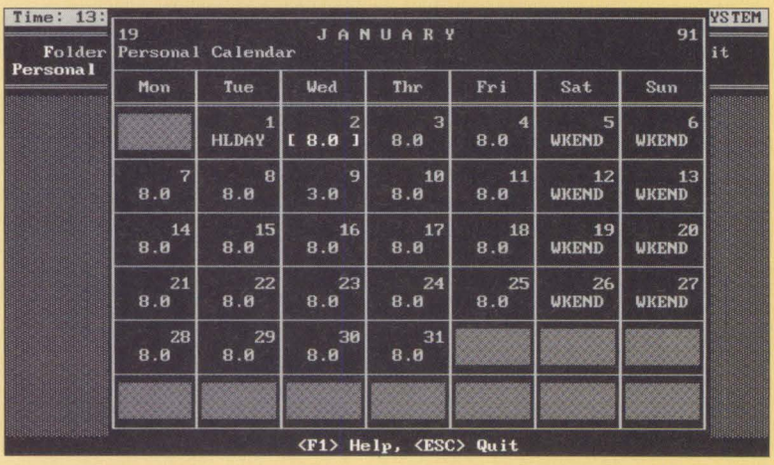
Let's say, for example, that you run a massage parlour – none of your painted-strumpets-flashing-the-goods stuff of course, but a high-class establishment unofficially registered with the local constabulary. There's peroxide and petroleum jelly to buy, sheets to be laundered, floors to be cleaned – it's a wonder there's any time left for thumping and pummelling the punters.

Install *Task-Pro* on the front-desk PC however, and job delegation is as simple as assigning people and priorities to previously-sorted tasks.

Up and running, the program is as pretty a work-aid as you'll ever find. Delectable pop-up and drop-down menus open in a smooth sideways scroll that looks incredibly slick. There's context sensitive help available at all times, super report generation, calendars, unlimited folders, pick-lists for everything and ... much more all for a registration fee of £59.95 (£35).

Bottom line? You'll wonder how you ever managed without it...

PC **87%**



***Task-Pro*: individual on-line calendars can be assigned to daily tasks, and the tasks themselves stored in 'folders', all of which makes task assignment very easy..."**

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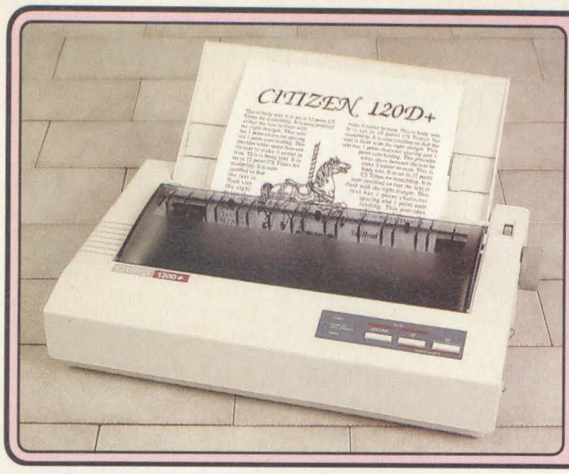

9 PIN PRINTER

144 CPS **80** COLUMN

- *Citizen 120D+ - 9 pin - 80 column*
- *144cps Draft, 30cps NLQ*
- *4K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface as Standard*
- *Graphics Resolution: 240×240dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
- *Pull tractor & bottom feed*
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RRP: £199
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £224
SAVING: £95
SILICA PRICE: £129

SERIAL INTERFACE OPTION
The 120D printer is available with a serial interface for £139+VAT. Ref: PRI 2125 - £163.33 inc VAT.

£129
+VAT=£151.58 ref: PRI 2120

9 PIN PRINTERS

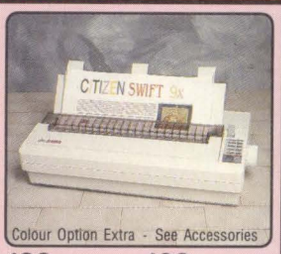
FREE! COLOUR KIT

192 CPS **80** COLUMN

- *Citizen Swift 9 - 9 pin - 80 column*
- *192cps Draft, 48cps NLQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 240×240dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
- *FREE Colour Kit*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

RRP: £239
COLOUR KIT: £38
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £302
SAVING: £123
SILICA PRICE: £179

£179
+VAT=£222.08 ref: PRI 2209



Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

192 CPS **136** COLUMN

- *Citizen Swift 9x - 9 pin - 136 column*
- *192cps Draft, 48cps NLQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 240×240dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
- *A3 landscape printing*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

RRP: £329
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £354
SAVING: £105
SILICA PRICE: £249

£249
+VAT=£292.58 ref: PRI 2309

24 PIN PRINTERS

FREE! COLOUR KIT

216 CPS **80** COLUMN

- *Citizen Swift 24e - 24 pin - 80 column*
- *216cps Draft, 72cps LQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 6 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi*
- *Epson, IBM & NEC P6+ Emulation*
- *FREE Colour Kit*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

RRP: £365
COLOUR KIT: £38
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £428
SAVING: £169
SILICA PRICE: £259

£259
+VAT=£304.33 ref: PRI 2534

Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

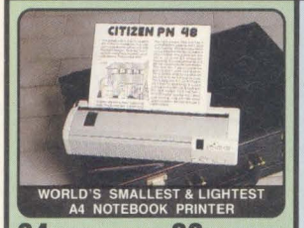
192 CPS **80** COLUMN

- *Citizen 224 - 24 pin - 80 column*
- *192cps Draft, 64cps LQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
- *Colour Option Available*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

RRP: £269
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £294
SAVING: £95
SILICA PRICE: £199

£199
+VAT=£233.83 ref: PRI 2484

NOTEBOOK PRINTER



WORLD'S SMALLEST & LIGHTEST A4 NOTEBOOK PRINTER

64 CPS **80** COLUMN

- *Citizen PN48 Notebook Printer*
- *Non-impact Printing On Plain Paper*
- *LASER QUALITY - 64cps*
- *4K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts*
- *Rear and Bottom Paper Loading*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi*
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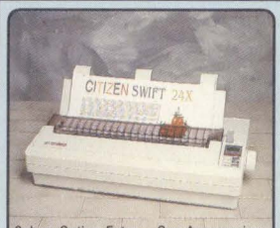
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £350
SAVING: £101
SILICA PRICE: £249

£249
+VAT=£292.58 ref: PRI 2100

24 PIN PRINTER



Colour Option Extra - See Accessories

192 CPS **136** COLUMN

- *Citizen Swift 24x - 24 pin - 136 column*
- *192cps Draft, 64cps LQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 4 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Resolution: 360×360dpi*
- *Epson, IBM and NEC P6 Emulation*
- *A3 landscape printing*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

RRP: £489
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £514
SAVING: £165
SILICA PRICE: £349

£349
+VAT=£410.08 ref: PRI 2574

24 PIN PRINTER

GOLD AWARD
Best Budget Printer 1990
Micro Decision

- *Citizen 124D - 24 pin - 80 col*
- *144cps Draft, 48cps LQ*
- *8K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts*
- *Parallel Interface*
- *Graphics Res: 360×360dpi*
- *Epson and IBM Emulation*
- *FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit*

144 CPS **80** COLUMN

RRP: £249
STARTER KIT: £25
TOTAL RRP: £274
SAVING: £105
SILICA PRICE: £169

£169
+VAT=£198.58 ref: PRI 2534

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PRA 1228	124D/224 Sw9/24/24e	£42.00

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PRA 1209	124D/224 Swift 9	£32.25
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32K MEMORY EXPN

PRA 1753	124D/224 Swift 24/24e	£13.10

PRINTER STAND

PRA 1242	124D/224 Sw9/24/24e	£24.03
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Before you decide when to buy your new printer, we suggest you think very carefully about WHERE you buy it. Consider what it will be like a few months after you have made your purchase, when you may require additional peripherals or software, or help and advice. And, will the company you buy from contact you with details of new products? At Silica Systems, we ensure that you will have nothing to worry about. We have been established for over 12 years and, with our unrivalled experience and expertise, we can now claim to meet our customers requirements with an understanding which is second to none. But don't just take our word for it. Complete and return the coupon now for our latest Free literature and begin to experience the "Silica Systems Service".

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Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 55C

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The best of the rest • The best of the rest • The best of the rest

Impressed at the wide variety of software reviewed in this month's Business and Applications section? Well, there's plenty more where that came from, and we have reviewed a lot of it in our first four issues. Here's a round-up of the top scoring-programs...

PC

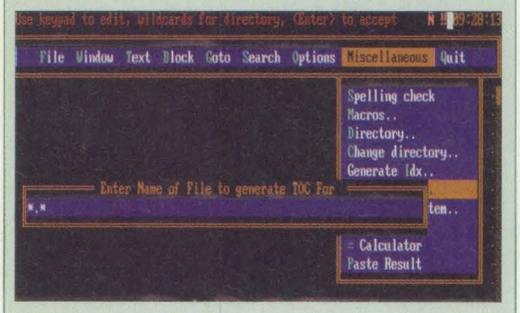
1 Easy Edit II — Issue 2 — 95%
AsEditCo, Warren Cottage, Warren Lane, Elmswell, Suffolk IP30 9DT ☎ 0359 41601
A superb and friendly word processor that is so packed with excellent features that you will hardly be able to believe the £35 shareware fee.

2 Homebase — Issue 1 — 95%
Brown Bag Software, 2155 South Bascom Avenue, Suite 114, Campbell CA 95008 ☎ 0101-408-559-4545
What this desktop organiser doesn't offer you definitely don't need – word processor, database facilities, compact comms functions to name a few.

3 PowerMenu — Issue 1 — 90%
Brown Bag Software, 2155 South Bascom Avenue, Suite 114, Campbell CA 95008 ☎ 0101-408-559-4545
A friendly menu-driven replacement front-end to do away with the dreaded DOS.

4 Marketeer 2.1 — Issue 2 — 90%
Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716
For the field sales rep, *Marketeer* is a contacts manager and sales prospecting system and is the ultimate tool in organising lists of clients.

5 Word Fugue — Issue 2 — 90%
Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340
An excellent and adaptable word processor that even generates tables and lists with the minimum of fuss and includes an 100,000-word dictionary. Shareware.



***Word Fugue*: simple-to-use menus make it great for novices**

6 Goal Seeker — Issue 3 — 90%
Brown Bag Software, 2155 South Bascom Avenue, Suite 114, Campbell CA 95008 ☎ 0101-408-559-4545
A handy little add-on utility for speadsheets that can work out the relationship between data so that you can work out 'goals'.

7 Invoice Master — Issue 4 — 85%
Precision Software Application, 10 High Street, Tadlow, Herts ☎ 0767 23302
Covering everything from invoices to stock control, *Invoice Master* is the complete feature-packed package for all small service businesses.

8 AppTrak — Issue 4 — 85%
Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871
Personnel Managers, keep track of all those job applicants. Now when you say, "We'll keep your details on file," the file needn't equate to the rubbish bin.

9 Track-It — Issue 4 — 85%
Ensign Systems, Freepost, London SE26 5BR ☎ 081-778 2871
Need to keep a track of how your stocks are doing? Get a hold of *Track-It*.

10 PullDown — Issue 2 — 85%
Nildram Software, 26 Stanley Hill Ave, Amersham, Bucks ☎ 0494 729236
A simple-to-use front end that is everything a replacement for DOS should be – but be warned, you'll have to have a hard drive to use it. Shareware.

ST

1 FastBase — Issue 3 — 93%
Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness ☎ 0463 225736
Possibly the best shareware database in existence, *FastBase* enables you to open up to 22 database files at once and is stuffed with features.

2 Arabesque — Issue 4 — 92%
South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD
The drawing package that no ST-owning draughtsman should be without.

***Arabesque*: all the tools a computer draughstman could need**

3 Sheet 2.0 — Issue 1 — 90%
Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650
A speadsheet that provides a dedicated programming language with which to perform the most complex of today's financial double dealings.

4 ST Writer — Issue 1 — 90%
Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650
Quite simply the best shareware word processor around for the ST – it beats the pants off most commercial products too, so what are you waiting for? Get it.

5 Fone Cost 2.0 — Issue 2 — 90%
Ainley Publishing and Communications, 16 Copyground Court, Copyground Lane, High Wycombe HP12 3HG
If you want to keep your phone bills to a minimum you need *FoneCost* – it counts BT phone units ticking by as you natter away.

6 Opus — Issue 3 — 90%
Softville, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Elletra Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants
A true third-generation spreadsheet with extended mathematical functions, a fully functional text editor and lots more besides.

7 Easy Text — Issue 2 — 85%
Goodman Enterprises, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650
This is a budget desktop publishing package that is an attempt to provide true page layout on the ST – and it works fairly well.

8 Monster — Issue 4 — 85%
South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD
If you do a lot of DTP then you'll know what a pain it is that monitors are a different shape to most pages. *Monster* helps you get around this problem.

9 Double Sentry Accounts — Issue 3 — 85%
Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Elletra Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XN
Accounts handling software that's so good you can hardly believe it's not a fully commercial product. Available in both a cut-down PD and a full shareware versions.

10 onSchedule — Issue 3 — 80%
Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness ☎ 0463 225736
A program to help you construct sensible shift plans for those who perform weekly shift work. Handy functions ensure its superiority over pen and paper.

AMIGA

1 Uedit — Issue 3 — 90%
Cranham's Leisure Software, PO box 7, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3YL ☎ 0908 640763
A fully-customisable text editor which means that you can make *Uedit* fit your exact requirements. What's more, it's a doddle to use, too.

2 Text Engine — Issue 3 — 86%
17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982
Text Engine is simple to use and offers a comprehensive range of features.

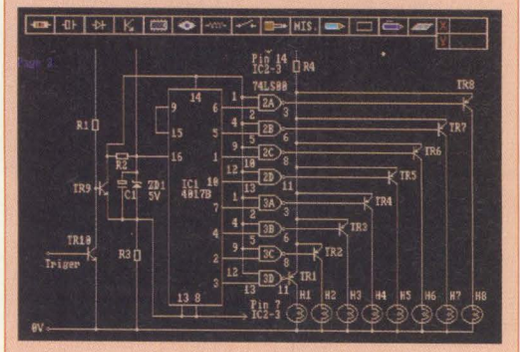
3 TapeCover — Issue 4 — 85%
17-Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982
If you make a lot of your own recordings on cassette tapes then you need an easy-to-use tape cover designing program. And that's exactly what this is.

4 Transcript 1.0 — Issue 2 — 85%
Software Expressions ☎ 0272 637634
An exceptional word processor, packed with features and lightening fast to use.

5 Road Route — Issue 4 — 80%
Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091-587 1195
How to get from A to B using major roads. Written for the US so you'll have to put in a little time and effort feeding in your local data to make it work for you.

6 Text Plus — Issue 2 — 80%
Amiganuts United, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX
Another very good word processor which is absolutely bursting with features.

7 ElectroCAD — Issue 3 — 80%
Crazy Joe's PD,145 Effingham Street, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 1BL ☎ 0709 829286
A comprehensive schematic designer for the electronic doodler. It provides an on-screen drawing board dedicated to the design of electronic circuits.



Want to design your own circuits? *ElectroCAD* can help

8 Bank'n — Issue 3 — 80%
Cranham's Leisure Software, PO box 7, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3YL ☎ 0908 640763
The perfect bank account manager for your Amiga. It enables you to store every transaction, total them up and generate handy reports for printing out.

9 Quick-Base — Issue 2 — 75%
17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982
Provides and maintains a database of names and addresses which you can use to print out address labels. Simple but effective, it also looks good.

10 dBase II — Issue 3 — 75%
SPD, 62 Manor Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 3LJ
A lightning fast database which has deliciously crisp and clear screen displays.

Instant demos

Want to create great demos, but daunted by the complexities of machine code? Then demo creators are the solution. Tim Howell discovers how easy it can be be to produce your own intros...

Demos might be short, and they're probably loaded fewer times than any other type of software, yet, ironically, many of them require more programming expertise and time spent on them than in the coding stages than the average PD game or utility. Some are incredibly complex, featuring detailed animation and all sorts of graphical wonders, most of which require a great deal of mathematical calculation and extensive coding knowledge to achieve; this is enough to deter people from attempting to write demos.

However, there is another option. A number of demo groups have put together programs specifically designed to create demos, so that anyone with a computer can put together a scrolly masterpiece. There are quite a few demo creators on the Amiga and ST, but, reflecting the lack of demos on the computer, none for the PC. ST and Amiga demo creators are similar in the way they do things, and are based on three main elements: a graphical logo, music and the obligatory scrolling message. Some let you add a few additional elements, such as moving the logo or have starfield effects.

What's involved?

The way the demo creators work is by importing graphics and sounds that have been created by other programs. This means that to take full advantage of the creators you will have to have other programs such as an art package for the graphics. As for music, most demo creators require tunes that have been composed using on of the many *Soundtracker*-type programs that are available for both the Amiga and the ST. Occasionally you might also need a text editor to write the scrolly text as not all demo creators let you do this from inside the program.

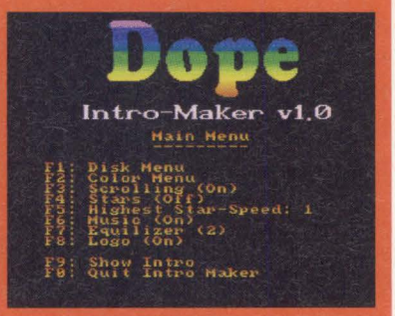
Usually, though, to show what the demo creator can do, there are an assortment of pictures, music

Dope Intro Creator (Amiga) – Stunning intros with the minimum of effort

1 The first thing you want is a logo to be displayed at the top of the screen. The demo maker only likes IFF files – use the ones provided or your own imported one. Go to the disk menu and type in the name of the one you want

2 You need a thumping tune blasting out of the monitor speaker so the next step is to load in a *Soundtracker* module. There are a lot of *Soundtracker* tools around which make it easy to create decent-sounding tunes

3 For the scrolling message the program has to load in an ASCII text file which contains the text for the message. The program won't let you type in the message directly so you have to enter it in beforehand in a text editor



4 Once you've organised each of these parts as you want them, you can go back to the main menu and set-up the demo proper. You want scrolling, the logo and the music so switch all of these settings to on

5 A moving starfield is an essential element for any demo and the intro maker gives you a couple of options for these. You can select whether you want the stars to come from the left or the right, and what speed you want them to move at. Have the stars moving to the left at a speed of 15

6 Now for some more advanced effects. You want the logo to colour cycle so go into the Colour menu to set it up. Make the centre part of the logo to colour cycle by setting the Logo-Cycle Colour to 01. You could also change the colours of the stars as well, but they look best in black and white

7 You can see how things are going at any stage of the demo-creating process by pressing the F9 key. Have a look at how things are going now... That looks good enough, but if there were any changes to be made you could go back and make them now and then see what effect the changes had

8 Save the demo to a disk. The process doesn't end there, though – the format in which the demo is saved means it can't be run normally as it's not an executable file. To make it one you have to use the *Bytekiller* compacter included on the disk. There are instructions on how to do this in the program

The alternatives

If you want to write demos, but want to do something a bit more advanced than can be achieved with the programs reviewed here, you'll have to start programming for real. Before you start delving into assembly language, though, you'll have to learn a lot about your computer. You'll have to get some books on the subject, but the best way of learning is to talk to other programmers. A lot of coders log on to bulletin board systems (BBSs) to discuss the ins and outs of programming. There are also a couple of disk magazines sold by PD libraries that explain and give examples of programming. One of the best of these is the *Amiga Coders Club* (ACC) series of disks available from Amiganuts.

As for the software you'll need, there are several vital programs. You'll need an assembler, which is basically a program that interprets your commands and turns them into machine code that the computer understands. There are a few PD assemblers, but the fastest and easiest to use are commercial. The PD assemblers have their use; they're cheap enough for those people interested in coding to get hold of and see what it's all about. But, many are so unfriendly they're likely to put off more people than they encourage.

Other essential tools include a paint package to draw the graphics. For creating music there is a wide range of *Soundtracker*-type utilities (see next month's issue).

Other handy tools include graphics converters for converting graphics from one style or resolution to another. There are also numerous sprite and bob creators available, but often a graphics package is used to create these. The graphicsare later converted into the relevant data to be used by the assembler. You can get hold of tools that have been designed to help create special elements of demos, such as copper bars (see Programming & Utilities section on page 26). Most of these utilities and tools are available in the public domain. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to find anything like these available commercially.

and scrolltext messages included with the creator so that you can experiment with them.

You can rarely attain the stunning results that experienced demo writers achieve with demo creators, but if you want to design demos but are put off by the complexity of writing them, they're ideal.

Amiga demo creators

There are quite a few utilities available for the Amiga that claim to be demo makers. In fact, in demo terminology, they're more like intros; small programs that feature basic graphics and sounds, whereas demos are usually a bit more complex. The sort of results you can achieve with demo creators is not nearly as powerful. Some are more basic than others, and are mainly text-based with a scrolling message at the bottom of the screen and a title at the top. Two examples of these are *Rainbow Writer* and *Ghost Writer*. These aren't advanced programs by any stretch of the imagination, but if you just want to send a message, they do the job. Among the more advanced examples are:

All the options in the *Dope Intro Maker* are achieved from straightforward menu screens like this one

Dope Intro Maker (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Not 500 Plus compatible • Disk 580 • Crazy Joe's, 145 Effingham Street, Rotherham S65 1BL ☎ 0709 829286

Programmed in 1989, this is an archaic program that nevertheless produces quite respectable intros. There are five main ingredients to an intro created with the *Dope Intro Maker* – a logo, a starfield, a scrolling message, music equalisers (along with music) and a choice of other effects.

All the program's options are accessed from a menu screen which makes creating the demo easy. The logos that are loaded in are normal IFF images, which can be drawn with any paint package. As for the music, this is normal *Soundtracker* fare so the quality depends on how good you are at using the music utility. The starfield you have behind the main action on-screen can move from right-to-left or from left-to-right and at four different speeds. You also have a choice of colour-cycling effects – the logo can be cycled and the background behind the logo can contain coloured copper bars. You can enter your scrolling message at any stage in the proceedings. There is only one font for your message to be displayed in, and this can't be changed.

Once you've set-up the program the way you want you can view your efforts, and can return to the creator if you want to make any changes. If you don't then you can go ahead and save the demo, which can then run independently of the main creator.

The *Dope Intro Maker* shows its age, but provides a simple introduction to producing basic intros.

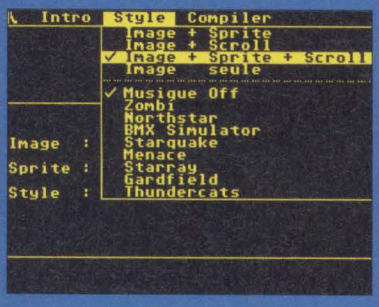
AMIGA 72%

Celtic Demo Maker (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Not 500 Plus compatible • Disk 580 • Crazy Joe's, 145 Effingham Street, Rotherham S65 1BL ☎ 0709 829286

The *Celtic Demo Maker* is not as advanced or as easy to use as the *Dope Intro Maker* but it does have a couple of features it can boast over its rival. The main improvement is that it provides coloured copper bars

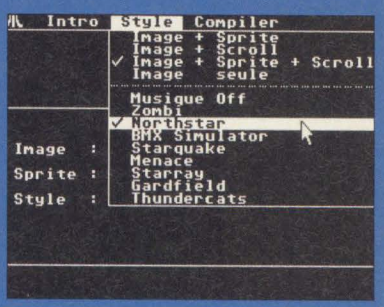
Intro Concept Demo Maker (ST) – Just follow these eight simple steps and soon



1 Before you start to do anything, decide what elements you want in the demo – you have a choice of just an image with a sprite, the an image and a scrolling message, or an image, a sprite and a scrolling message. Choose all three elements for this demo

2 The next step is to create a picture and load it into the program. Pictures can be either in *Neochrome, Degas* or PC1 formats so virtually any paint package will be able to create compatible images. The picture can take up the full size of the screen

3 For a bit of on-screen movement add a sprite. Several come with the program, but you can create your own as well and import them into the program. But why not be lazy (and patriotic) and choose the Atari symbol which is one of many supplied on the disk



4 You have a choice of several pieces of music from which to choose, all ripped from different games. Apart from the copyright implications of using these tunes, they are all of a reasonably good quality. Unlike other creators you can't load in your own tunes

that can bounce around behind the coloured logo at the top of the screen. They can be in one of four colours, the settings of which are determined by commands placed in the scrolling message.

The scrolling message itself can be entered from within the demo creator, unlike the *Dope Intro Maker* which requires you to load in an ASCII text file. The other features are pretty basic – it has the usual scrolling message, background starfields and can handle standard IFF pictures. These functions are accessed from a main menu screen which can be dragged around the screen using the mouse. If you want to load in a file, like the *Dope Intro Maker*, you have to know its filename beforehand – it won't give you a requester to help you select a file.

Choose your options on the *Celtic Demo Maker*'s menu screen

Compared to the *Dope Intro Maker*, this program isn't as flexible. You can't adjust the direction or speed of the stars, for example, and it is fussier about the format of IFF pictures that it will accept.

AMIGA 66%

Where's Red Sector?

Amiga owners might be thinking, "Hang on! *The Red Sector Demo Maker* can do better than any of the programs reviewed here. Why haven't they reviewed it?" There's a very simple reason why.

It is, in fact, a commercial program and not PD at all. It has been distributed by PD libraries for a long time, but it is sold commercially by German company Data Becker. Check out news page 13 for the full story.

ST best of the rest...

In our survey we came across very few other demo creators for the ST worth mentioning.

- ***The TCB Tracker Demo Maker* is supposed to enable you to incorporate your own picture and modules created with *TCB Tracker* into your own demos; however we were unable to get this running on either a normal ST or an STE, even though the program is supposed to be able to work on both these machines. Whether this was a fault of the particular copy we had we don't know. In any case, the features it offered didn't seem half as good as the *Intro Concepts Demo Maker*. If you'd like to look at it, though, it's on Disk 1432 from The South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD.**
- ***DIY Demo Creator* lets you combine a picture with a scrolling message. Not overly impressive. It's on Disk UTL 585ST from Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416.**

Of the ST demo creators available, there is nothing that comes close to the *Intro Concepts Demo Maker* which is a shame. Maybe someone somewhere is working on a really good demo creator to compete with it?

ST demo creators

Compared to the Amiga, the ST isn't as well-endowed with demos, nor, for that matter, demo creators. The ST seems to be lagging a couple of generations behind the Amiga in terms of the creativity and innovation that is being used in the writing of demos. However, the demo creators that are available are of a pretty reasonable quality and compare well with their Amiga counterparts in terms of both ease of use and the results they produce:

Intro Concept (PD)

ST • 512K • Disk 1979 • The South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD

Intro Concept is the best of the demo creators for the ST. The program originated in France which means that the instructions and menus are all written in French. Thankfully this isn't too much as a problem as many computing terms, such as sprite and pic, are the same in most languages.

As far as creating demos goes, *Intro Concept* is quite adept. The resulting demos are not much more than a picture with a scrolling message, a few sprites and a bit of music, so they wouldn't get great reviews in the demo reviews pages of *Public Domain*, for instance. But the program genuinely makes it quick and easy to put a demo together.

To do this you have to go through a series of stages, putting the different elements of the demo together as you go. There are three main parts to a demo created with the *Intro Concept* creator; the background picture, which can be either in PC1, PI1 or NEO format; sprites, which you can load in or edit within the program; and music, which has been 'borrowed' from a few games. Once a demo has been put together, the next step is to compile it so that it will run. First you save the data to a floppy disk, and then you can either return to the program to watch your masterpiece, or you can exit and run it separately.

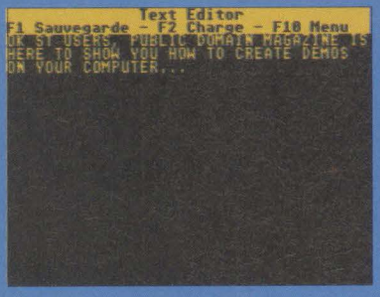
Pictures like this come with the *Intro Concepts* creator and let you start work immediately

The *Intro Concepts* demo creator works well and produces good results. What more can I say?

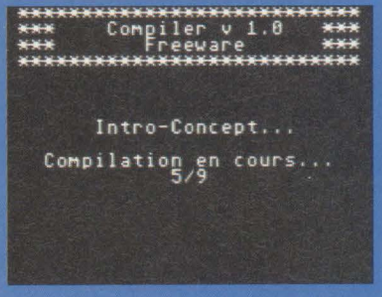
ST 82%

e creating your own three-element demos in under two minutes

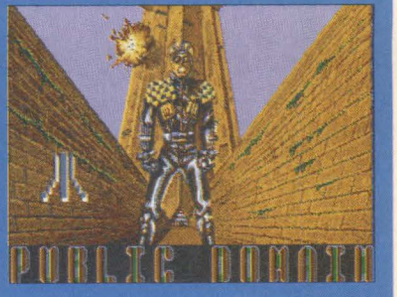
5 What would a demo be like without a scrolling message? First, a font has to be chosen to make the message clear and effective. You have a choice of six, which vary in their style and colour so you should be able to find one that suits your picture


Text Editor
F1 Sauvegarde - F2 Charge - F10 Menu
OK ST-USERS, PUBLIC DOMAIN MAGAZINE IS
HERE TO SHOW YOU HOW TO CREATE DEMOS
ON YOUR COMPUTER...

6 Now for the fun bit – writing messages to other ST users, acknowledgements and other bits of nonsense to provide the text. This is done on a normal editing screen, and you can save the text separately to use in other demos if you want



7 One unusual aspect of this demo maker is that you can't see what you have created until you have compiled it. Luckily this takes less than a minute to do – basically the creator saves the demo you have created to disk – so there's no need to get too impatient



8 Once the demo is compiled and saved on the disk it's ready to be sent to anyone you want. Not a masterpiece by any means but miles better than an ASCII file any day. And at only around 55K you can save dozens of them on a single disk...

Problem Solved!

If you want to convert graphics, view animations or control your stubborn printer then these are the pages with all the answers. Public Domain's dedicated computer, PDQ, has been busy this month, analysing these and many other PD problems. Tim Howell tries to make sense of the print-outs it produces.

Send the questions you want answered to: Help Me PDQ, *Public Domain*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

Get converted

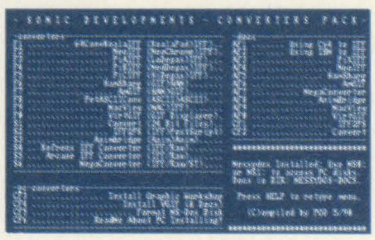
Q I am the proud owner of an Amiga 500 (1Mb, 2 drives) and an Atari 500 STE. I have been searching for a utility in PD that will enable me to convert Amiga IFF pictures to ST *Degas* or *Neochrome* picture files for quite some time now. Could you please tell me if there is a PD or shareware program that will do the job?

Paul Harthen, Dukinfield, Cheshire

A *If you're interested in converting one graphic image format to another, then the* Sonic Developments Converters Pack *(Disk 1221 from 17 Bit Software) is the disk to look at.*

It's packed with programs that enable you to convert a number of image standards to other formats, including: IFF to Degas*;* Neochrome*,* Degas *and Mac to IFF; and several others. There are a number of other graphics utilities on the disk, all of which are useful in various ways.*

The disk is also equipped with MessyDOS*, so you can read from and write to PC-formatted disks as well as Amiga ones. Because the ST can read PC disks easily, it is simple to transfer files between the Amiga and ST.*



As you can see, the *Sonic Developments Converters Pack* is full of graphics utilities

Recently having come to light...

Thanks to the extraction of a bit of fluff from some vital circuits, a couple of questions that PDQ couldn't answer last month are now answerable:

- **Mr RF Hodges asked if there were any garden design programs for the Amiga. He's in luck! There's a program called *LandScape* on Fred Fish Disk 521 which you can get from most Amiga libraries.**

  ***LandScape* is a simple CAD program which helps to design garden layouts, letting you place lawns, plants and paths on the screen and the then drawing a 3D picture of what the garden might look like.**

- **Mr KP Cross wanted to know where he could get hold of a disk called *TrainerMaker*. There is such a program on Fish Disk 532. While PDQ hasn't seen the program, it apparently enables you to modify things like the number of lives and high scores in some games. The games do have to be multi-tasking, so you couldn't use it with any of the (ugh) commercial games bought in shops.**

Printer blues

Q My problem involves PD word processors and text editors. When I try to print out the pound sign with *QED* the pound prints out as the decimal 192 of the IBM code set 2, or as the L symbol. I am not sure why as the typeface varies depending on which program I am using. *Text Plus* prints this, as does *Wordwright*. The only one that actually prints the pound sign is *Text Engine*. I've tried making my own disk and installing the GB keymap but to no avail.

My printer is a Star LC-200 driven by the CBM MPS 1000 driver. I hope that you can suggest a solution.

JM Porter, Leyland, Lancs

A *It's difficult to pin-point just what's causing your problem, JM. You don't say whether you use the same CBM MPS 1000 driver with all your programs, and if you don't use the same one then it could be the driver that is the problem.*

However, PDQ gets the feeling (not that computers have feelings, mind you – more of a twinge in the circuits) that you are using the same driver. The next step with the Amiga would be to check the keymap settings, but you've done that too...

Looking at the printout you sent in, your printer cannot print the pound symbol in the test mode on which your printer is currently set. Look in your manual and try selecting a generic Epson-compatible mode. If this fails, call Star on 0494 471111.

While some of the programs you use are able to print out the '£' sign, this is probably the result of either using their own custom character sets or setting the printer up so that it can print a pound sign.

As far as the programs themselves are concerned, if changing the emulation mode on the printer doesn't work, try customising the software. With QED*, for example, you could try setting the keymaps to GB (for those of you who don't know how to do this, refer to your Workbench manual) and then try using* QED*'s different print options to see what outputs you get. If you go to the printing menu and select Printer Select then you could choose between modes 0-3 to print out the text in different forms of data.*

Animated query

Q **1.** I am looking for a program with which I can create my own slideshows and animations. I have produced my own pics and animations using *Deluxe Paint 4* but I am at a dead loss as to how to run them without loading the package. I have tried using *Slideshow Construction Kit* with little success.

I know from reading directories of other slideshows that you need a start-up sequence and it's this that I'd like to know how to do.

2. I need a good database that can

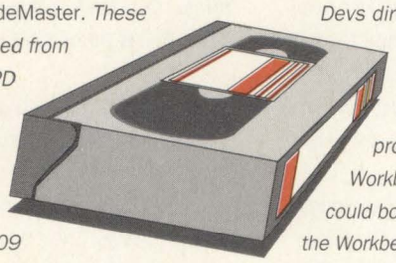
cope with my extensive video and record library. You say *bBase II* is a good database but you don't mention how many fields or records it can handle. At the moment I am using *AmiBase II* for my video library but this can only handle 4,000 records on ten fields. I need a database that will handle more records – maybe in the region of 8,000. Would it be worth investing in *Superbase 2*?

I use an Amiga 500 with 1Mb of memory and a second disk drive.

Mick Herod, Hucknall, Notts

A *Two answers for the price of one (stamp) there, Mick. Let's deal with them in order:*

1. *There are a few slideshow and animation viewing utilities for the Amiga – the problem is finding out which are any good and where to get them from. A couple of possibilities for you to try are: Fish disk 96, which has* Animplayer*; Fish disk 151 which features* Slideshow*; and Fish disk 274 which has* SlideMaster*. These can be obtained from most Amiga PD libraries. Also look at Utility disk 111 from Crazy Joe's (☎ 0709 829286) which has an assortment of picture and animation viewers.*



2. *As for a database, before you go to all the expense of buying something commercial, you could take a look at the latest version of* AmiBase, AmiBase Pro III*. This lets you create as many records as you want, limited only by the size of your disk capacity, so the program claims.*

In theory you could store up to 6,000 records on a floppy disk, and though this is a lower figure than the 8,000 you want to store, AmiBase Pro III*, from Amiganuts, could be worth a look. Amiganuts can be reached at: 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX*

Printer preferences

Q I have been looking for a good database and have found two in PD, namely *Flexibase 2.0* and *Labelbase 3.8*. However, I have come across one or two problems:

1. The printout from *Flexibase* is not formatted, so is there any way to change this and create a formatted printout? *Labelbase* will not print out at all. I set up the custom label details then click on the print icons only to be met with a bleep and flashing background. I have had problems before with other programs with an error: 'cannot open printer.device'. Could this be the problem and how do I get over it?

2. Also, on *Labelbase*, as well as *BankN*, the screen colours clash somewhat; to such a degree on *BankN* that I can't use the program to see what it's like. Is there any way to change and save the screen preferences? I have copies of *PPrefs* and *Colourkwik*.

A J Hill, South Benfleet, Essex

A *Although I'm not familiar with the programs you mention, the error message you get leads me to believe you have an Amiga.*

1. *It does, as you say, sound as if the printer.device file is missing from the Devs directory of the program's disk. This can be rectified in a couple of ways. First, if your programs are run from the Workbench screen then you could boot up your machine with the Workbench disk and then swap disks when you want to run the programs. That way, when your programs want to print out, if the Printer.Device is missing, then you will be asked to re-insert the Workbench disk.*

On the other hand, if your program can't be run from Workbench, then you should copy the Printer.Device file from the Devs directory of your Workbench disk to the Devs directory of your program disk.

2. *As for your other problem, screen colours can be easily changed using the Preferences program on your Workbench disk. This will let you change such things as the mouse speed as well as the colours of the screen and mouse pointer, enabling you to customise programs to your liking. Once you have made these changes, Preferences saves the new settings to a file called System-Configuration, also in the Devs directory. A shortcut is to copy the system-configuration file from a disk that has colours you like to the Devs directory of the program disk you want to change.* PD

Open to the public – how you can help

While PDQ's mass of megabytes can answer most PD and shareware-related problems, like most machines, it has its limits. We believe in the power of the human mind much more than this bucket of bytes, so here's your chance to show just how much you know. If you have the answer to any of the following queries, then here's your chance to show off your knowledge and win £10 into the bargain (or get in a free plug for your library, if you run one). Problem or answers, write to Public Knowledge now at the address on the opposite page...

● I recently bought a printer for my Amiga 500 and wondered if there's a program in the public domain which would enable me to write a music score on-screen and then print it out.

Mark Bickerdike, Great Preston, Leeds

● I have just become interested in the public domain and have purchased many titles already, but to my disappointment I have not managed to get hold of a rollercoaster demo.

I know one is available for the PC. However I own an Amiga 500 and as yet I have not come across it in this format. Can you please tell me if this version is available or not?

Andrew Betsworth, Carlisle, Cumbria

● I would like to locate a PD or shareware package that will output names, addresses and phone numbers on to 'standard' Filofax size address sheets. They are sized approximately 17 cm by 9.5 cm.

I tried *Catalyst* (sold by College Shareware) but lost patience with the 70 plus pages of Read.Me documentation that you have to plough through! I also tried *Address Controller* (from the Gemini stable), a very good simple and versatile package, but it couldn't output a 15 cm by 7.5cm page suitable for inserting into a filo.

Can anyone help please me? If possible, (I hope I'm not asking for too much) the package should also be able to produce labels of different sizes (the *Gemini* package restricts you to one size only, 9 cm by 2.5 cm).

Ken Hamer, Edinburgh

● I am desperately trying to find any and all programs for the Amiga on marine navigation.

J H Wilcox, Knowle, Bristol

A matter of public knowledge

Here are some of the replies that we have had to questions posed in previous issues that PDQ blew a fuse over.

● Vinyl re-mastering

WINNER £10

I'm writing in response to Peter Forshaw's letter in Issue 3 about digitally re-mastering 78s using his PC/AT. The best way I've found, as I have a few 78s myself, is not to use the computer at all but to use a mixer deck with built-in graphic equaliser and secondary equaliser. This gets rid of most crackles.

Mick Herod, Hucknall, Notts

● Quote unquote

WINNER £10

Our Production Editor Dave Golder was stumped by the origins of a quotation that was used in the Home and Education section our third issue. He's stumped no longer, thanks to this letter...

Don't be bugged. The quote is actually from French film director Jean-Luc Goddard (though you actually got it a but muddled: "I like a film to have a beginning, a middle and an end, but not necessarily in that order."

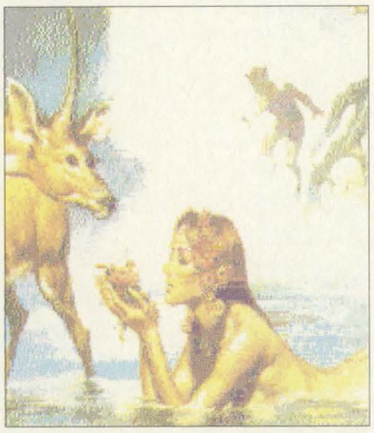
Talking about beginnings, here's one I like from Mickey Spillane: "I write the ending first. Nobody reads a book to get to the middle."

Roy Kay, Wirral, Merseyside

Thanks Mick and Roy for that help. It'll be fed into PDQ's databanks immediately.

Demos

Feeling like a bit of cheap entertainment? Aha! So you admit that cheap entertainment has feelings, eh? Well, never mind about that now, have a look at the cheap entertainment Maff Evans has rounded up from the world of PD demos...



The power of the female gender comes to the fore in the *Fantasy Women Slideshow*. But is it art?

Fantasy Women Slideshow (PD)

ST • 512K • BUDEM 4 • New Age PDL, 30 Anderson Estate, Lower Road, Hockley, Essex SS5 5NG

One of the main subjects of fantasy artwork is buxom women. Why this is, I don't know, but there are more pictures of females with protruding breasts like pairs of space observatories to be seen in this genre than anything else. This slideshow features a number of screens digitised from just this kind of picture.

The shots range from Amazonian-style warrior women to fairies (not the kind in children's books, that's for sure), most of which are unclothed to a major extent. The digitising quality is pretty good, but the idea behind the disk seems to be more about smuttiness rather than any acknowledgement or appreciation of the artists' talents.

Still, there are a few pervy people out there who will want to get hold of this kind of thing, but mums had better check those order forms for this disk's number before allowing your sons to send off!

ST 30%

Superbowl Slideshow (PD)

Amiga • Plus compatible • 1611 (Two disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

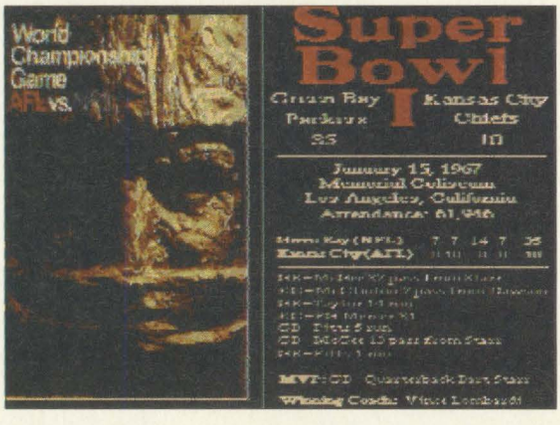
Here's one for any fan of that hard-hitting game of Gridiron, otherwise known as American Football. This two-disk demo features digitised shots of Superbowl souvenir programmes from the last 24 years, right back to the first competition held between the Green Bay Packers and the Kansas City Chiefs at Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles back in 1967.

Along with the digitised graphics there are facts and statistics from the finals, including the names of the Most Valuable Player winners and the notes on each of the scoring plays. Although some people may find this a little boring, the fact is that American Football has managed to pick up quite a large following in this country since Channel 4 started televising the game in the UK back in 1982, so there is definitely a market for it.

So, if you're one of those sports fans that sits glued to the TV every Sunday evening to find out how your favourite Gridiron team performed in last Monday's games, then this will no doubt be of great interest to you (I must admit that I sat and read all the notes on each championship when I loaded the demo!)

An interesting piece of sporting memorabilia – even if it is a little simplistic, technically speaking.

AMIGA 57%



Step back into American sports history with this collection of pictures and facts collated from 24 years of Superbowl competitions

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Seventh Sense (PD)

Amiga • 1590 • 17 Bit, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

With a few well-received demos already in the public domain, coding team End of Century 1999 makes a return to the Amiga demo scene with *Seventh Sense*. The title evokes a feeling of mystery and the supernatural, but the disk is mainly just a collection of graphics demos.

First of all, an EOC logo built from yellow vectorballs is displayed and rotated to introduce the disk, followed by a pretty bog-standard CLI loading message. Things improve a little when the demo gets started properly with a rather nifty Japanese-style animation of a futuristic warrior hurling a ball of energy down an extremely ornate corridor. This leads immediately into the main title sequence.

The images in this section are quite nice, but the rather slow and plodding background music sounds more like mid-70s progressive rock than an atmospheric 90s' soundtrack.

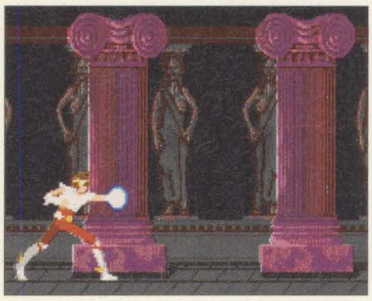
The music continues through the rest of the demo, all three measly sections of it. The first is a picture of a cathedral, complete with a rippling reflection and a string of (rather poorly) animated vectorballs, followed by a bouncing logo and a boring-to-read scrolltext. I wonder why none of these texts ever say anything that

could be of any interest to more than three or four people?

The most intriguing section is the last, which features a short, looped, ray-traced animation of a rabbit skiing down a mountainside. Although the clip is short, it's quite cute and colourful and should evoke the 'aah' reflex in a few people.

End of Century is starting to make a name for itself in the demo world, but *Seventh Sense* isn't the kind of ground-breaking release on which you can expect to build a (decent) reputation. True, a couple of the sections are mildly interesting, but you can hardly expect a demo consisting of four average sections to turn people's heads these days.

AMIGA 47%



Be prepared for some attractive pictures and cartoon animation effects in the *Seventh Sense* demo

Utah Saints 1991 (PD)

Amiga • 2Mb • Plus compatible • Disk 1579 (Two disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

It seems that some chart dance tracks get more attention from PD demo coders than others these days. After all, how many mixes of Prodigy's *Charly* have appeared already? One of the other tracks that seems to have captured the imagination of many coders is Utah Saints' *What Can You Do For Me?* and here we have yet another rendition of the single, this one purportedly by the Kenwood Chef.

This isn't quite accurate though, since the track hasn't actually been remixed at all. It's just a very large sample that takes up 2Mb of memory. Whereas most people manage to get long samples running on any Amiga by loading them from disk as they play, this one is a low-quality, fuzzy-looking affair which is simply loaded in its entirety and played back through the speaker. Oh, how very imaginative!

The Utah Saints have been backed up with a little help from the Lemmings on this disk

The two-disk demo is given a little variety by the addition of a few amusing samples at the beginning, including an odd recording of Noddy Holder (of Slade fame) singing *We Wish You A Merry Christmas* (the demo was obviously coded towards the end of last year).

This is followed up by a mickey-take section before the main tune is loaded, with an animated Lemming on the loading screen for you to look at (quite cute). Despite these humorous touches, the demo still veers towards the unfashionable side of dull. The Utah Saints sample is badly-recorded and the humour is all a little forced.

Add to this the fact that only users with a hefty amount of memory will be able to see it at all and you've got something with a very limited appeal. The Lemming bumps the score up a few per cent, though.

AMIGA 43%

Yak Yak Snu Fee Wee Whap Whap Kidda Demo (PD)

ST • SAM 01 • State 808 PDL, 3a Old Lanark Road, Carluke, Scotland ML8 4HW

As far as impressive introductions to demos go, this one is severely lacking. To grab people's attention, you need

cont p7

Five... Four... Three... Two... One... Thunderbirds – The Facts is, um, not FAB

Thunderbirds – The Facts (PD)

ST • Steve Bye, 28a Newbridge Street, Exeter, Devon EX3 3JW

Judging by the success that the series has managed with the Friday evening repeats on BBC2, Gerry Anderson's classic, *Thunderbirds* has quite a few fans, both old and new. The PD demo circuit once again acknowledges this fact with yet another demo based on those wooden heroes (I'll avoid the obvious jokes about the *Prisoner Cell Block H*-style of acting, thank you very much).

The demo itself is simply a collection of digitised shots from the program, along with a few snippets of information on the characters and vehicles involved. As each screen is called up, a short sample from the program is played, in the form of either a snatch of music or a piece of dialogue ("FAB!").

There are actually only ten shots included, and the digitising quality is pretty poor to say the least. All the pictures are displayed in a rather horrible range of reds and yellows, making it pretty hard on the eyes. Calling the demo *Thunderbirds – The Facts* is a bit of a misnomer, since the only facts included with the pictures will hardly be news to anyone who has watched more than one episode of the program.

If you're not a fan of *Thunderbirds*, then this is hardly likely to convert you, but if you are already a staunch follower of the Tracy clan, don't punish yourself with this!

ST 19%

THUNDERBIRD 2
VIRGIL
TB2 HUGE CARGO VEHICLE.
USED TO CARRY DIFFERENT PODS
CONTAINING OTHER RESCUE VEHICLES
SUCH AS THE MOLE AND TB4.
SLOW CASUALLY TEN MINUTES BEHIND TB1
BUT NEEDED IN 95% OF RESCUE OPO'S.

The lowdown on my favourite Thunderbird – but isn't it supposed to be green?

FAB 1
LADY PENELOPE
LADY PENELOPE I.R.'s SECRET LONDON AGENT
ALWAYS WITH PARKER, HER LOYAL CHAUFFER AND SERVANT.
PENNYS ROLLS ROYCE IS EQUIPPED WITH GRAPPLING HOOKS
AND MACHINE GUNS.
PARKER
FAB 2 IS PENNYS RATHER MORE
CONVENTIONAL CRAFT.
FAB 2

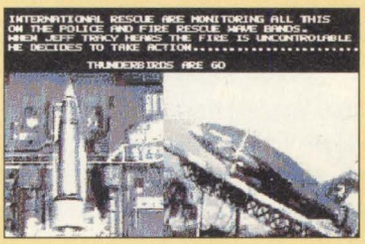
The English arm of the International Rescue operation, headed by Lady Penelope

Episode 18: 30 Minutes Before Noon (Shareware)

ST • Registraion fee: £5 • Steve Bye, 28a Newbridge Street, Exeter, Devon EX3 3JW

Not content with offering just one *Thunderbirds* demo, Steve pops up with another disk. This time the format is a slideshow with a story.

Based on the 18th episode in the *Thunderbirds* series (hence the title) the demo consists of a sequence of shots digitised from the TV show along with some extended captions.


INTERNATIONAL RESCUE ARE MONITORING ALL THIS
ON THE POLICE AND FIRE RESCUE WAVE BANDS.
WHEN JEFF TRACY HEARS THE FIRE IS UNCONTROLABLE
HE DECIDES TO TAKE ACTION.....
THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO

A scene from *Episode 18*, which actually has a storyline to go with the digitised pictures

Unlike Steve's other *Thunderbirds* demo, this one is actually vaguely interesting. Maybe it's the fact that there are more screens to look at. Maybe the changes in colour palette on the grabs are more appealing. Perhaps the presence of a plot to link it together makes it more watchable. Well, the combination of these elements makes Episode 18 a nice addition to the memorabilia collection of any *Thunderbirds* fan, not to mention a vast improvement on the previous demo.

ST 48%

Some stripes and a scrolly message. Give it a silly name and you've got a demo, I don't think

to have a really strong start to a disk, but the *Yak Yak* demo (yes, let's call it that to save space) simply consists of a mashed-together rendition of Technotronic hits backed up by an incredibly slow and boring scrolltext.

And what comes next on this so-called mega demo? Absolutely nothing. The rather duff introduction is all that there is! What an absolute waste of time.

ST **20%**

At the Movies 2 (PD)

Amiga • 1Mb • Disk 1592 (Four disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

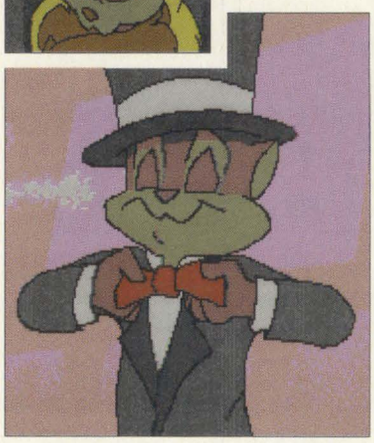
Would any demos round-up worth its salt be complete without an Eric Schwartz animation? Of course not! So it's nice to see him return with a blistering sequel to his modern classic *At the Movies*.

Amy the Squirrel is still having trouble with her amorous boyfriend in the cinema, but this doesn't stop her from falling asleep in her ever-so comfy chair. When she is asleep, she dreams that she has been whisked away to a magical land (which looks very much like a cinema) where a gentlemanly chap is waiting for her – complete with top hat and bow tie.

She instantly falls for this refined chap and is swept away on a sea of bliss (if you know what I mean, nudge-nudge). Soon enough, though, she re-awakens in the cinema to the startled face of her boyfriend, who seems to know nothing of the her romantic experiences... or does he?

As ever, Eric is on good form with *At the Movies 2*. The style is clean and sharp, with some wonderful cartoon characters and drawings to portray the action. Unfortunately there is no sound, but this is made up for by the excellent action. Users with only one drive and 1Mb of memory may find disk swapping and the long loading time's a bit of a pain, but it's definitely worth the effort. Another winner for Eric Schwartz.

AMIGA **88%**



Amy is whisked off her paws by a well-dressed gent in Eric Schwartz's *At the Movies* sequel

Over 'ere son! On me 'ead! Teapots play the passing game on the *Tea Pot Animation*

Tea Pot Animation (PD)

Amiga • 2288 • PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD ☎ 0702 612259

It's been a while since a simple looped, ray-traced animation has appeared on the Amiga, but here we go with a new one, starring an old favourite of demo writers – the teapot.

The clip is quite straightforward, being a cartoon of two teapots throwing a lid to each other. Sounds silly? Well that's because it is!

The style is quite attractive, though, and a sense of humour is needed to make these simple clips work. It's not an epic animation (unlike some of the ones that have appeared recently) but it still has a certain amount of charm.

AMIGA **52%**

Tony Horgan, PD remix wizard – serious music or a load of old Roobarb?

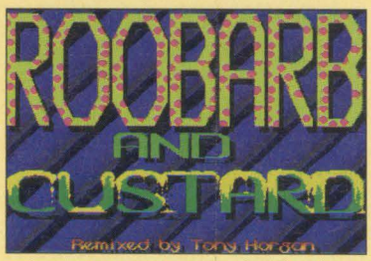
After wowing PD listeners with his rendition of Prodigy's *Charly*, Tony Horgan makes a comeback with two new Amiga 'remixes'.

Roobarb and Custard (PD)

Amiga • 1616 • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

The first is a version of that strange track *Roobarb and Custard* (that dreadful track by a group so appalling I can't be bothered to remember their name).

Although the original didn't have much of the *Roobarb and Custard* element involved – some say that it was simply jumping on the bandwagon of Charly – (yes, you mainly – Ed), Tony has rearranged the track so that more of



This colourful image can only go with a crazy tune like the dance hit *Roobarb and Custard*

that wild and wacky TV cartoon theme is in the Amiga version.

Despite this, the track still bumbles around looking for direction. Sure, the mix has been well-sampled and edited, but only fans of the vinyl version are going to want a track which consists of reshuffled sections of the original, especially when the accompanying graphics are so weak. Sorry, Tony – but this isn't a patch on Charly.

AMIGA **37%**

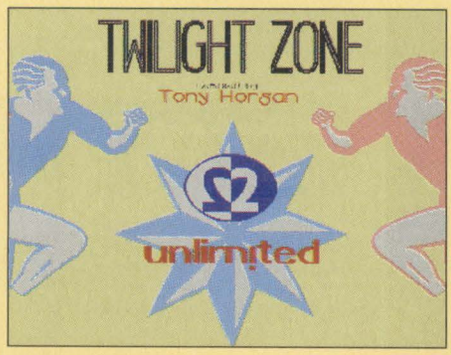
Twilight Zone (PD)

Amiga • 1617 • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

For his second dance release of the month, Tony Horgan has gone for a mix of 2-Unlimited's recent chart hit, *Twilight Zone*. The visuals to accompany the tune are based on the rather stylish record sleeve, complete with Bauhaus-esque running figures (that's Bauhaus the design school rather than the early 80s goth band).

The soundtrack is a pretty decent rendition of the original, with some clear sampling and crisp editing being employed to get the best results. Unfortunately the mix suffers in the same way as *Roobarb and Custard* – there's nothing radically different about the track to grab the attention. The only likely audience is those of you who like the track but can't afford the single, or those fans who want every single mix of the record that appears. If you fit into either of these categories then go for it. If not you're not going to be converted by this rather bland effort.

AMIGA **46%**



The Olympian imagery from the sleeve of the *Twilight Zone* single makes its way onto the Amiga

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from 74

European Demos (PD)

ST • MDEM 9 • State 808 PDL, 3a Old Lanark Road, Carluke, Scotland ML8 4HW

The main preoccupation of demo coders on the ST is to try and create more and more megademos with game-style selection screens. The *European Demo* is yet another example of this.

After a few pleasant-enough logos to introduce the demo, the 'game menu' appears. This time it's a platform and ladders variant, with a warrior figure that you control with the cursor keys to select the demos.

The menu system itself is pretty good with some attractive graphics to look at. The only problem is that it's all been seen so many times before.

After selecting your demo and swapping disks, the relevant section is loaded up for your delectation, the animated loading screen accompanied by a looped sample from a hypnotic dance track.

As in most of these cases, the demos themselves consist of the usual 'big scroll text and dull soundtrack' affair, coded by the likes of Pendragons and the Overlanders. One of the more impressive sections is *OVR2*, which contains a pretty decent soundtrack, even if the visuals are a little run-of-the-mill.

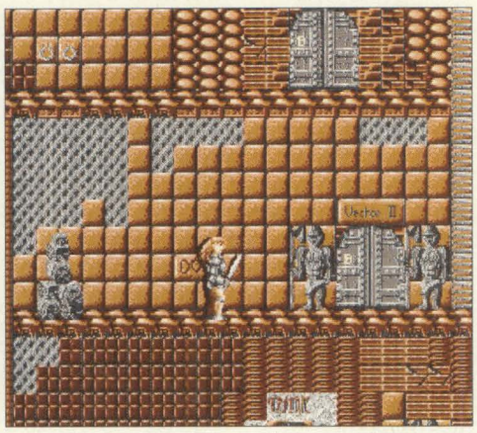
The *X-Biosmen Demo* is also quite groovy (what a cliché), with a fairly cleanly-sampled soundtrack and a smooth, wireframe grid bouncing in time with the music.

If only the other demos on the disk could have matched the standard set by these short clips. The problem is that the *European Demos* collection seems to have just been cobbled together from other people's code, which hardly makes for original or exciting viewing.

Another annoying drawback is that there is a fair amount of disk swapping involved, a niggle which is compounded by the fact that the demos don't seem to be organised in a sensible structure between the two disks.

A couple of points to be learnt here children (not to mention mega-demo coders): originality and planning. Remember these two words in future.

ST 47%



The strong Atlas character contrasts with the demo select system on the *European Demos* collection

Insanity (PD)

Amiga • Plus compatible • Two drives required • Disk 1576 (Three disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Yet another rave-dance track gets converted to the Amiga! The man responsible for this release is Martin Palmer, who has elected to transfer Oceanic's *Insanity* to disk.

The demo first loads up with a picture of the Dead Dead Good records logo (also, incidentally, home to chart band The Charlatans) along with a few credits. The music then starts accompanied by a small clock at the bottom of the screen to keep track of the time.

The music is loaded from disk as the track plays, so that the entire song can be heard from your Amiga, but you can only get to hear the whole thing if you have a second drive plugged in. A third drive would be useful too, since otherwise you have to keep an eye on screen to know when you are supposed to put in the last disk. The

Cartoon canine capers with doggie stars of the big and small screen

Muttley and the Beanstalk (PD)

Amiga • 1580 (Three disks) • 3Mb • Plus compatible • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Dave Hollis is becoming a bit of a well-known name in the field of digitised Amiga animations, what with his *Stunt Anims* and *Muttley on the Bounty* demos (see issue three). For his latest outing he has decided to go for a memory-gobbling epic – a whole three megs worth!

The clip is an abridged version of yet another *Dastardly and Muttley* cartoon, this time the spoof being based on the classic fairy tale of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Muttley is ordered to plant some beans by the tyrannical Dick, but, surprise surprise, the beans grow into a mighty plant reaching to the heavens. The mischievous hound climbs the stalk to find himself in a giant's castle. And who should the evil giant closely resemble? Well, I think you can pretty much work that one out for yourself!

Needless to say, the cartoon features some crazy chasing and, slapstick antics... so I won't bother saying it. What? I just did say it. Ah, well, never mind...

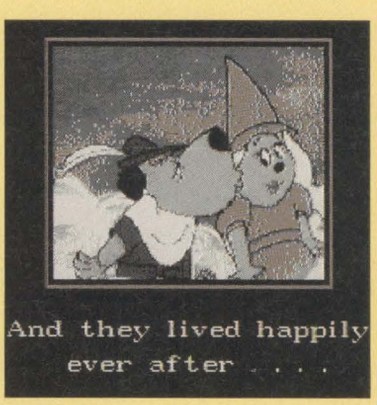
Even though the demo sits on three disks and takes up 3Mb, the display is still only a postcard-sized window in the centre of the screen. Despite this, the (unfortunately mono) digitising quality is extremely good, with a large amount of cartoon hiding in there to watch. Unfortunately, only users with pretty hefty memory expansions will be able to watch this small digitising epic. But having said that it is the ideal thing for posing if your mates only have smaller expansions – not to mention being very entertaining.

AMIGA 82%

The start of the tale and Muttley is given yet another menial task to carry out

After climbing the beanstalk and making a rescue, this nasty character awakes

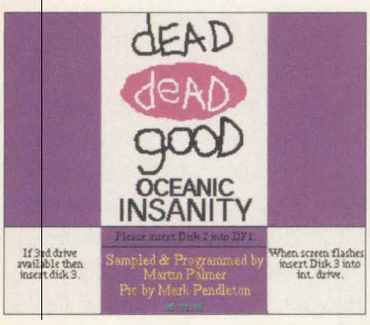
Quick! Make a dash for the exit before the bad-tempered giant catches up!



Aah! A nice, happy ending. Just what you need on a cute little cartoon such as this

sample quality is OK – if a little muffled – but the problem is that it's just the single. There's no remixing, no re-editing, nothing like that at all. This is all very well if you just want the original single or want to show off your machine (after all, that's what demos are all about), but otherwise it's all a bit boring.

AMIGA 42%



No confusion about what's happening on this. Just read the title – it's a bit of a giveaway!

A breathtaking flight across a sunlit mountain range without moving from in front of your Amiga. Is this possible? Well it is with the fractal-based clips found on the *Scenery Animator Anims* disk

Scenery Animator Anims (PD)

Amiga • 1Mb • Plus compatible • Disk 1619 (Two disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

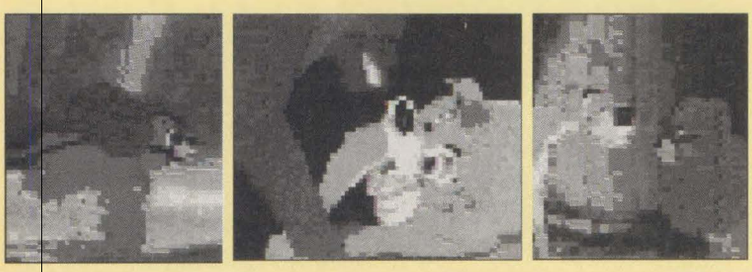
Mandelbrot and chaos are terms bandied around all areas of computers and science, but what are they? To many people maths is a complete mystery. Anything beyond the times tables and they're lost. So trying to explain the theory behind fractal landscapes is a bit like trying to tell a Cro-Magnon man that the world is round. But we can still appreciate the stunning results they can achieve.

One of the ways in which fractals are most frequently used on the Amiga is for creating scenery pictures. Using fractals, you can calculate surface shapes of mountains and other land formations to create an extremely realistic picture. One program in particular, *Scenery Animator*, enables you to create landscapes and actually move an imaginary camera across them to create impressive animations. This demo features a couple of anims created using the program to give you some idea of what it can do.

Although the clips only appear in a small window in the middle of the screen, they still look extremely effective, giving the feel of zooming down a valley in a helicopter. The clips are fairly short and occasionally a glitch appears (at one point the viewer apparently flies through a mountain).

However, the demo shows off one of the more visually impressive uses of this fascinating branch of mathematics. All you nature lovers and equations twisters had better check this one out!

AMIGA 72%



A mad dash, a heroic scrap with a pack of wild hounds and a meeting in the dark alley. What could it be? A small section of the classic Disney film *Lady and the Tramp* ? Could be...

Lady and the Tramp (PD)

Amiga • 1581 • Plus compatible • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Not content with placing one top notch animated demo in the the public domain this month, Dave Hollis has put together something else on a slightly less ambitious scale than his 3Mb *Muttley* animation.

On this one it's the chase scene from that Disney classic *Lady and the Tramp* that has been passed through the video digitiser. A muzzled Lady flees from some rather nasty canine yobs, but never fear because that loveable mongrel Tramp is around to save the day.

The style is the same as Dave's other clips, in that the mono-digitised action takes place in a small window in the centre of the screen and there's no sound. Those who have seen any of Dave's other clips will know what to expect quality-wise, and *Lady and the Tramp* pretty much follows the same format as usual. The animation is very clear, well-grabbed and offers some worthwhile distraction for a few minutes.

If nothing else it shows off the digitising power of the Amiga!

AMIGA 72%

Ray Traced Dreams (PD)

Amiga • 1605 • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

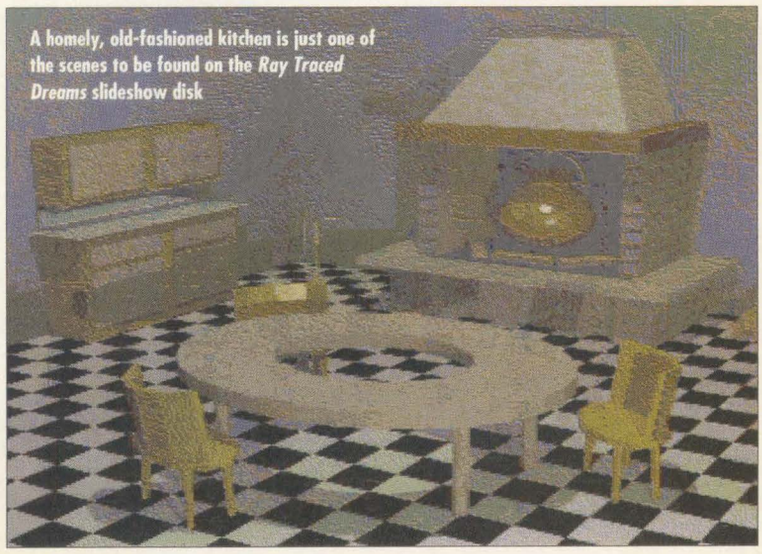
To create really solid-looking objects on the Amiga, your best bet is to have a go at ray-tracing. If you've not heard of this method before (you mean you didn't read the extensive demo feature in last month's *Public Domain*?) or you simply like ray-traced pictures, then this disk is for you.

Put together by End of Century 1999, the demo features seven slides depicting various ray-traced shapes. These range from the downright odd to more traditional scenes. *The Rabbit Skier* and *Duke Jet* are strange parodies on animal life, whereas *Eggy Pop* and *Ancient Kitchen* feature normal scenes such as a boiled egg and an old-fashioned kitchen (the titles say it all, really).

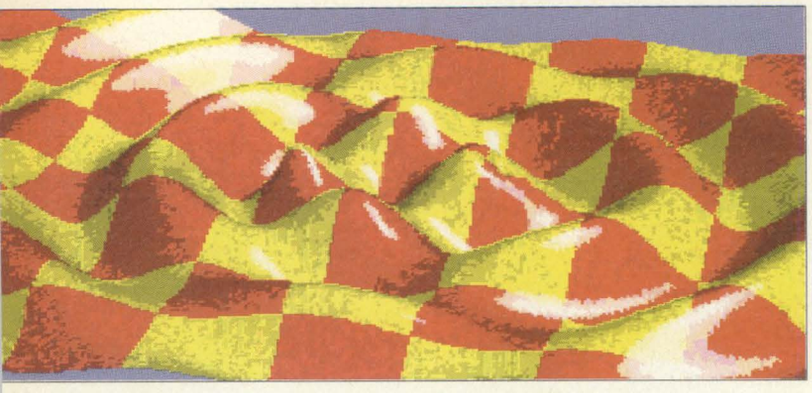
One of the best pieces on the disk is *Hard Error*, which features a broken hard drive and a warning sign (how many computer users know just that feeling).

The artist, Quaid, has managed to capture an excellent feel with these pictures, showing just the kind of impressive effects that are possible using this technique. Unfortunately, the music that plays behind the menu isn't so hot. The doomy atmosphere of the track is let down by the fact that it all sounds very muffled. Still, for some clean-cut and well-drawn artwork this is well worth a look.

AMIGA 78%



A homely, old-fashioned kitchen is just one of the scenes to be found on the *Ray Traced Dreams* slideshow disk



Some extremely wibbly, but very colourful waves courtesy of the ST *Wavy Animation*

Wavy Animation (PD)

ST • 512K • 223ST • Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN
☎ 0734 452416

Nothing frivolous or fancy about this one. Skipping through all the pretensions usually found in demos, this disk contains one simple animation. In cases like this, it's quality and not quantity that counts.

After loading a desktop with a pretty background drawing, the demo goes on to display a chequered floor with a series of waves rippling across its surface. The whole thing has been ray-traced to produce a smooth, colourful and realistic clip which, although simple, is impressive. The speed and direction of the animation can also be changed using the number keys to get some pretty weird effects. There you go! Short and sweet.

ST 74%

Amiga Fantasy Series – Maxi-Music 1 (PD)

Amiga • AF 005 • Comp-U-Save, PO Box 157, Hayes, Middx UB3 4SR

This makes a nice change – some original tunes on a music disk! Well, one original and one radically different version of a well-known track anyway.

The first piece is a reworking of Enigma's first chart single, *Sadeness*, wittily entitled *Sade in China*. The rhythm is a lot harder than the original, and F Bellec, the sound wizard behind this mix, has added a lot of strange elements to the song to produce an entirely original remix. There are the obvious Shakuhachi and Gregorian chant sounds as you might expect considering the source material, but also some clever snippets of vocal samples and scratching... well, you can just imagine how weird it sounds. Weird, but still very impressive.

The second piece is a totally original track by Tjao called *Mexicano*. This is a very slinky, Latin-sounding tune, with trumpets and pianos galore bursting out of the bytes. The feel is very similar to Swiss pop duo Yello in their more off-beat moments (particularly about the time of the album *You Gotta Say Yes to Another Excess*), right down to the warbling harmony instruments. Could Tjao be a pseudonym for Boris Blank? I think we should be told. Great fun!

AMIGA 85%

A nice metallic logo introduces the rather odd music selection on the *AFPD Maxi-Music 1* disk

Voyage (PD)

Amiga • 2255 • PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea Essex SS1 2YD
☎ 0702 612259

What have we here? Well, well, well! It's not a music disk! It's actually one of yer actual megademos! The team behind it is one of the more well-known teams, Razor 1911, which is becoming renowned for putting together... er... megademos.

Razor attempts to put the frighteners on the viewer with its latest offering, by displaying a picture of a *Friday the 13th*-style mask behind its logo on the first screen. Things do get friendlier, though, so all you squeamish types can come out from behind the sofa! The main introduction starts up by whizzing some stars across the screen into the distance, with some overlaid text which is very much in the style of the opening credits of *The Terminator*. This is

Two tracks from Two Toms – Bizarre Inc and Blue Pearl get the PD treatment

Those happy Amiga music chaps, Two Toms, have returned to the Amiga demo scene with two pieces of music this month.

Playing with Knives (PD)

Amiga • 2Mb • Disk 1593 (Two disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

First up the Toms bring us a complete port of Bizarre Inc's *Playing with Knives*.

The demo is accompanied by a rather strange Heineken picture which seems to have nothing to do with the song itself – pretty as it is! The track itself is one of those 'loads-as-it-plays' affairs, coming on two disks.

As with the Tony Horgan stuff, it's nothing new, just being a rendition of the original single. The difference is with Two Toms is that the team manages to get very good sample quality out of the machine, so that the music sounds as clean as the record.

If you have two drives and want to play Bizarre Inc on your machine, then have a look at this. However, if you've already got the single you might find it a little dull.

AMIGA 45%

Anyone for a beer? No? Well just listen to the rendition of Bizarre Inc's chart hit, then

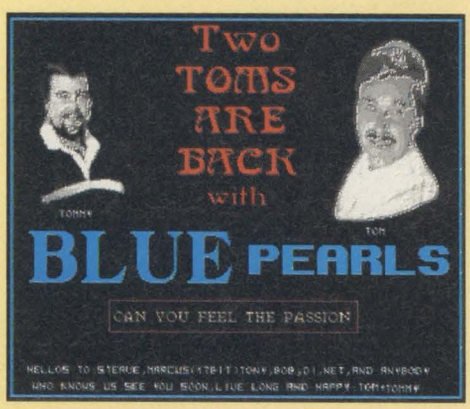
Can You Feel the Passion (PD)

Amiga • Two drives required • Disk 1594 (Two disks) • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

The second Two Toms release is a version of Blue Pearl's latest chart hit, *Can You Feel The Passion?*

Once again, the two-disk 'continuous sample' is a pretty clean recording of the single (which to me sounds like an attempt to tap in on the hard-core electronic music image of bands like Nine Inch Nails. I mean, did you see them on *Top of the Pops*?). If you haven't got the single, but fancy a jig around your bedroom (or wherever your Amiga happens to be) then this is definitely worth a look, but for those who already have the original record it's not really worth shelling out again simply for a different format – unless you're a completest!

AMIGA 45%



Who are these two? They didn't appear with Blue Pearl on *Top of the Pops*. Ah! It's those PD musicians, Two Toms!

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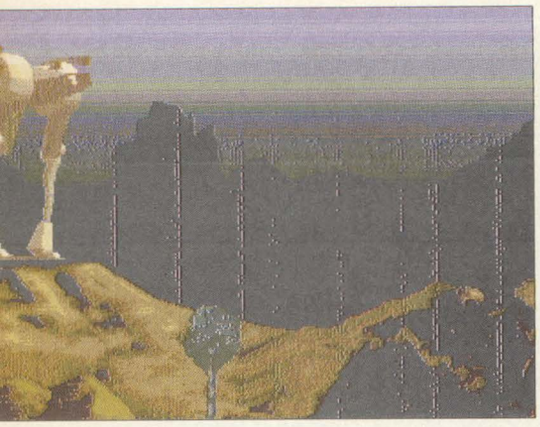


A walker surveys the landscape before him on Razor 1911's rather impressive offering – the *Voyage* demo

from 78

followed by a few animated logos introducing the members of the team, backed with a pretty standard piece of PD music.

After this rather lengthy introduction, the demo starts to get going properly, with a rather excellent 3D walker animation. This is split into two parts – first, the walker stalks across a fiery floor before turning to fire a laser blast at the viewer. Next he's stood on a mountain range; the shot pans across as the walker turns to look out into the distance. Very impressive!

Some more 3D follows this, with a space fighter flying around some planets before the view spins off into the void. After a strange 'hurricane' vectorball effect (with a set of ball-bearings being dropped onto a rotating floor then being sucked up by a whirlwind), a blast door opens to reveal a storm of confetti whirling around in space.

This colourful effect gives way to what is one of the strangest and most impressive sections of the demo. A flat, pixelated runner appears inside a wire-frame 'room' which then rotates as the runner pounds around in a circle before twirling across the screen into infinity. This simple effect has a very *Tron*-like feel, evoking the mystery of the world inside computers (enough poetry, already).

Voyage has an impressive, almost film-like quality, with all the sections capturing the scope and imagination of a movie introduction. This goes to make the demo one of Razor 1911's best outputs yet. A well-deserved winner of the Megademo of the Month award!

AMIGA **85%**

Some more well-produced 3D graphics from Razor's *Voyage* demo. Now it's time to swoop in for an attack on the planet!

The best of the rest • The best of the rest

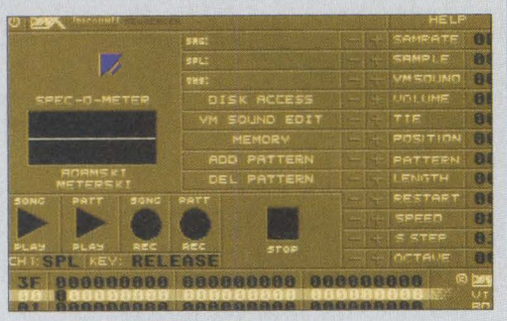
Need to know the best of the latest demos? Here are the top scorers from our first four issues...

ST

❶ A Little Music Demo — Issue 1 — 92%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0463 225736

A collection of eight excellent *Soundtracker* tunes covering a wide variety of styles.



Euro-beat, thrash acid... *A Little Music Demo* has the lot

❷ Ooh Crickey, What A Scorcher — Issue 2 — 90%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0463 225736

An impressive demo from the Lost Boys that combines humour, decent music and a selection section requiring you to fly a spaceship through a 3D landscape.

❸ The Run — Issue 1 — 84%

MPH, 10 Chandlers Court, Eaton, Norwich, Norfolk

A superb piece of 3D ray-traced animation from the master, Tobias Richter. A high speed car chase along some American freeways with great attention to detail.

❹ Transbeauce Demo II — Issue 2 — 81%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0463 225736

An entertaining selection, of which the *Art of Code* demo is the standout – excellent music accompanied by an animation of a band thrashing away at their instruments.

❺ Mr Benn Demo — Issue 1 — 80%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT

Relive those childhood memories. The theme music plays, accompanied by a series of quality digitised images. Includes a *Rocky and Bullwinkle* demo as a bonus.

❻ TWM Module Disk 11 — Issue 2 — 79%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0463 225736

Combining clear sound with powerful tunes, this is well worth checking out.

❼ Hardcore Dancefloor — Issue 4 — 78%

State 808 PD, 3a Old Lanark Road, Carluke, Scotland ML8 4HW

A collection of tunes put together using samples from techno tracks such as *Quadrophenia, Charly* and *Night in Motion.*

❽ Things Not To Do — Issue 1 — 78%

Riverdene PDL, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0463 225736

Strange animated clips of some karate fighter. Quite funny in a crude way!

❾ ULM New Year Demo — Issue 2 — 78%

Rust PDL, 361 Ordanance Road, Enfield, Middlesex ☎ 0992 717828

Mainly pretty dodgy collection with one major saving grace. The *Zoolook* demo, based on the Jean Michel Jarre track is really rather good.

❿ Year After Demo — Issue 3 — 75%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness ☎ 0463 225736

A megademo which uses a nice spoof on the Amiga workbench as a file selector. Generally unremarkable, but some of the techniques and 3D effects are impressive.

AMIGA

❶ Odyssey — Issue 4 — 95%

NBS, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QA ☎ 0983 529594

Five-disk epic of galaxy-spanning action with a variety of animation styles and music, all pretty impressively done. The dogfight is stunning.

❷ Robin Reliant Turbo Challenge — Issue 4 — 95%

4th Dimension, 94 Breedon Street, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 4FE

A witty little piece of animation which reproduces the attract screen from the top-selling game *Turbo Challenge III*, replacing the Lotus with a Robin Reliant.

❸ Anti Lemmin' Demo — Issue 1 — 93%

17 Bit Software, 2/8 Market St, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Superlative animation from Amiga demo maestro extraordinaire Eric Schwartz. Watch the furry little vermin from the famous game indulge in Rambo-style action.

❹ Manic Raves — Issue 1 — 93%

17 Bit Software, 2/8 Market St, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Eight songs on two disks that are so darned good they'd sell by the truck load if they were sold on 12-inch record and played endlessly at your local rave.

❺ Gulf War Conflict — Issue 3 — 91%

PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD

Another masterpiece from Eric Schwartz. The subject matter might be past the sell-by date, but the humour, animation and caricature of Saddam are great.

❻ Wildfire Megademo — Issue 3 — 91%

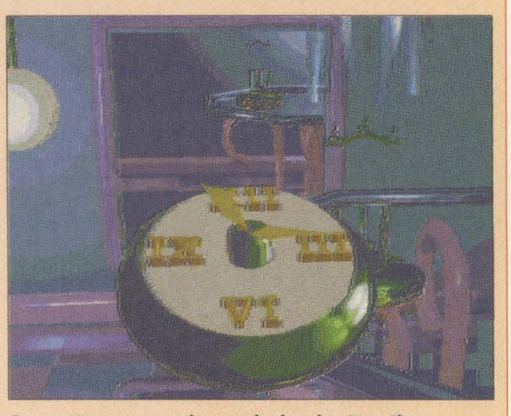
PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2YD

Packed with some really powerful, pounding music and acieeed-style graphics, this demo is a real winner from the Wildfire coding team. Turn up loud.

❼ Time Flies — Issue 2 — 91%

Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton

Superb piece of 3D ray-tracing as a clock flies at high speed around a room.



Ray-tracing at its very best as displayed in *Time Flies*

❽ Hardwired — Issue 4 — 90%

NBS, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QA ☎ 0983 529594

Two-disk compilation containing a progressive series of sections unveiling new and wonderful techniques – space battles, vector demos, scrolls, they're all here.

❾ Mars Flight — Issue 1 — 90%

17 Bit Software, 2/8 Market St, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

Excellent 3D animation of a spaceship landing at a Martian city spaceport.

❿ ATF Agility — Issue 2 — 90%

NBS, 132 Gunville Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5LH ☎ 0983 529594

More Schwartz magic, this time from the *Aerotoon* series. A young jet tries to get the better of a more experienced old fighter.

WORK IN PROGRESS

***PC Format* is the UK's leading PC leisure magazine and is devoted entirely to helping you get more out of your leisure time with the PC. Issue 7 is out on March 26 and fast forwards you into the exciting world of video. We'll show you how to liven up your home videos with titles and graphics, and how to get video images on to your PC.**

The rest of the magazine is packed with everything you need to keep you entertained: comprehensive and well-written game reviews, incisive and thought-provoking profiles, plus indispensable regular columns on shareware, music, CD-ROM, problem solving, playing tips and much more. Don't miss it. (Contents subject to change without notice, because life is like a baby – you never know when it's going to throw up unpleasant surprises.)

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Whether you run a PD library or bulletin board, *Public Domain* is interested in hearing all about what you have to offer. Fill in our questionnaire and help us to help you...

Do you run a PD library or bulletin board? If so, we want to hear from you! We're updating our records so that we know who's who in PD and shareware. It's for your own good too – after all, if we don't know about you, how can we let the world know about your library?

The information is mainly to be used so that we're kept up to date with what's happening. But it may be used for a library and BBS round-up in a future issue of *Public Domain*, so make sure you fill out the form if you want to get noticed. Don't worry – we'll keep any commercially sensitive information under our hats and we won't tell the poll tax people where you live.

And if you don't run a library or BBS, you could always rip out the page anyway, fold it into a paper dart and throw it at the cat.

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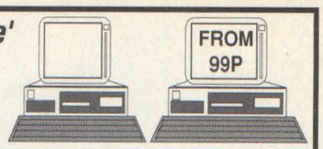

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DATABASE MANAGEMENT

Card Index - simple filing system. Can print out 3 x 5 cards.
Catalist (2 disks) - powerful mailing list manager. Over 32,000 names and addresses per list, duplication detection, post code formatting for over 100 countries, merge split, output on labels up to 8 wide. Rolodex cards. Hard disk req.
DBase III+? (2 disks) - well, not quite, but Wampum reads Dbase files, does reports, supports networking and more. Requires hard disk.
HyperShell - (3 disks) - multi-file Hypertext reference system, help system and menuing system. Has intelligent text file viewer, directory browser file manager and applications user interface prototyping with pop-up menus etc.
PC File V (3 disks) - Latest version of Buttonware's popular database system. Many powerful features but friendly and easy to use, replaces PC File + and PC File:dB. Hard disk required.
Speciality Database Software - store up to 1,000,000 records with sort search and report, 1 disk each subject (available separately): Record Collectors, Book Minders, Photographers, Antiques, Coins, Comics, Films / Videos, Home Inventory/ Insurance, Memorabilia, Stamps (Homecraft)
SR-Info (2 disks) - dBase compatible database system with programming language, WYSISYG screen designs, 6 datafiles open simultaneously, 65,000 records per file, versatile report writer (hard disk req. - Sub Rosa)

SPREADSHEETS

As Easy As - amazing Lotus 123 compatible spreadsheet, reads 123 files, macros etc
Lotus 123 Worksheets & Macros - includes cash flow, line-of-credit tracker, ratio analyser, stats calculator, growth capacity calc, queue analysis, new venture budget, quote generator.
Lotus 123 Worksheets (3 disks) - includes financial analysis, import utils, linear stats, biorhythms, travel business expenses, flowchart symbols, stock portfolio analysis, rental property analysis.
Lotus 123 Tutorial - covers menus, printing and databases (release 2 ONLY).
PC Calc + V2 (3 disks) - new features, more powerful, still integrates with PC File + & PC Type +, extensive manual. Hard disk required.
Pivot - high quality Epson printed output "addin" for As Easy As, with portrait or landscape, 6 NLQ Fonts, complete page layout control etc (Trius).
Side Writer - print out ASCII files on their side, ideal for wide spreadsheets.

GAMES/TRIVIA

Airstrike - fighter aircraft shoot-em-up with vector graphics, mach speed, night and daytime missions (CGA and joystick req.) (Rufus).
Arcade Games (4 disks) - includes Bugs!, JumpJoe, Datnoids, Nuclear Attack Simulation, 3-Demon, Kong, Bricks, Pyramid, Pitfall, PC-Golf.
Backgammon
Bermuda Triangle - sailing quest (EGA ONLY).
Blackjack! - accurate simulation.
Casino Games - includes Bridge, Othello, Roulette.
Castle - Popular adventure.
Cave Quest - fantasy role-playing game.

EGA Wheel/VGA Wheel - like popular wheel of fortune game, please state VGA or EGA

Football Forecast - Pools prediction system has support for 214 teams in English & Scottish leagues showing form, predictions and permutations.
Ford Simulator II (2 disks) - 16 models, 4 events including Grand Prix, also buyers guide and ordering information.
Grand Prix - from authors of Popstar/ Soccer Game etc.
Hack - adventure. DND style
Games 15 - Star Wars, Sea Wolf, Frogger etc
Games 16 - Soviets, Bricks, FLIGHTMARE.
Games 17 - Pac Man, Poker, Castle, Invaders etc.
Get Lucky! - adult games.
Mahjong - like oriental rummy with PUNGS. KONGS & CHOWS!
Monopoly/Tune Trivia - US version of famous board game. Tune Trivia like 'Name That Tune'.
PC Chess - play the computer or a friend, save load etc.
Pharoah's Tomb - archaelogical arcade action.
Pinball Rally - three versions of popular game.
Scrabble - computer version of popular board game.
Sea Battle - naval game spanning World War I & World War II. No save or load in this version (Rooney).
Starlord - high adventure in a distant galaxy
The Popstar - cope with pressures of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll as you tour the world
Sleuth - murder adventure
Spacewar - shoot 'em up with good graphics.
Soccer - yes! manage one of several teams and steer them towards glory.
Super Power - Six-a-game of superpower economics, trade and military conflict.
Trivia (3 disks) - The Trivia Machine has several categories and levels.
Willy The Worm - ladders, rolling barrels etc.

BUSINESS/VERTICAL

Easy Project - up to 2000 tasks, Gantt charts, automatic schedule generation, instant reports, dBase file compatibility (Parcell).
Forms Creation - design, save forms, save forms with data, printout. EZ Forms Exec.
Estate Agents System - storage and retrieval of information about properties, pending and closed sales, plus agents' details and helpful reports.
Estibid (5 disks) - contractors estimating/ costing analysis includes sub-contractors, materials, transport costs etc.
Marketeer - Sales prospecting system and contacts manager with built in WP, fast data entry, phone call history, appointments, mailshot etc (Sterling).
Invoice and Statements - Simple to use, customer database, single or period invoices, auto-numbering, account summary with aged debt/VAT (Software Foundation Ltd). (Hard disk required).
Job Cost (2 disks) - simple to use, powerful, cost monitoring system, with transactions, reports and utils (hard disk req. - Micro Data Assist).
Leadmaster - Sales program which tracks customers, prospective customers, and has progress file, re-contacts, standard letters etc.
Make My Day - new version of this Time Management system, Appointment Calendar, Job Schedular, Time Log and Expense Account Manager.
PDS* Quote - Quotation system, now includes context - sensitive help, pop-up calendar, pop-up calculator, import data etc. (Pro Dev Software).
Quickbid - Estimating package for Electricians, Plumbers, Builders.
Salesman - sales management which includes Clients, Product analysis, Note Pad and Appointments Diary. (Hard disk req.)
Superstock Stock control including suppliers, movements, P/Orders, stocktake, usage, backup, enquiries etc (McNab)
Service Plus (2 disks) - Maintenance and Service, Call Tracking, suitable for electrical, plumbing, heating services etc.
The Controller (2 disks) - powerful project organiser. (Hard disk required).

Ultimate Sales Program (2 disks) - fully integrated Sales, Invoicing, retail price list system with period statements and invoices (Ebrell)

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Billing/Invoicing System (2 disks) - itemised invoices/bills with balance forward, finance charges, subtotals, balance due, also reports.
Cashbook (3 disks) - 5 bank accounts, 5 cash accounts payments/receipts posting, 100 nominal accts/VAT codes, VAT summaries (Freeway UK).
Simple Accounts - includes sales, purchase, and nominal ledgers, cashbooks and bank reconciliation, VAT etc (Noyes).
Corporate Financial Analyst (2 disks) - company accounts analysis and planning, needs no modelling or spreadsheet experience, (Computer Financial Models UK).
Home Accounts - features checking, savings, credit cards and loan accounts with bill payments, calculator & calendar (FGS).
Home Finance Manager - Keep a record of Bank/Building Society accounts with monthly balances and details of standing orders also loan calculator with repayments/interest (Blackwood Software - UK)
Ledgermaster - (4 disks). Combines features of both previous popular packages, Accounts and Accounts Plus into one, includes both Nominal and Analysis options. (Freeway UK)
Page Financial Controller (2 disks) - shareware clone of the similarly named package. Includes sales ledger & statements, invoicing with discounts, purchase ledger with remittances, nominal ledger, cashbook & VAT. Stock/order processing & job costing, network ready (Page Consultants UK). Hard disk required.
Payroll (3 disks) - latest legislation, (Freeway UK).

GRAPHICS

Altamira - design posters, cards, logos, garden floor plans.
Clip Art 1 (3 disks) - approx. 120 trade logos/computer motifs for use with Timeworks Ventura.
Clip Art 2 (3 disks) - approx. 200 images including Dollar, Dwarf, IBM, Piano, Scissors etc. for use with Timeworks/Ventura.
Dancad (5 disks) - from simple letterheads to complex 3D cog-wheels with animation & rotation, now has support for post-script laser printers (hard disk req).
DROEGE (2 disks) - Printed Circuit Board Design.
Draft Choice - one of the easier to use CAD systems which includes drop-down menus, on-line help, drawing, editing, viewing, measurement/query options plus more from the authors of As Easy As (Trius)
Express Graph - 3D bar charts, pie charts, line graphs etc. from entered or imported data.
Finger Paint - paint program with Mac-like screen
Gem Drawings/Paintings - Fun collection of images including Dinosaur, Ghost Busters Logo, Star Ship Enterprise etc.
NorthCad 3D (formerly Quest 3D) - is a new version of this wire frame modelling system with view, zoom etc, now support CGA, EGA and VGA!
PC Key Draw (4 disks) - latest version of popular CAD package now includes library disk, tutorial, and manual disks with superb demo and utility to convert graphics to IMG format for DTP.
Quickroute - multi-layer PCB design with autorouter, zoom, pan redraw, menus, windows (Frost).
Slide Presentation - use camera to take snapshots of screen, then display as at a slide-show, ideal for training, demonstrations etc.
Smart Art (2 disks) - clip art collection in *.IMG* format including Animals, Insects, Reptiles, People, Vehicles, Business etc. (Bennett).

EDUCATIONAL/STATISTICS

Amy's First Primer (ages 4-8) - new compiled version, is a collection of fun games for young children that help them with skills like counting, letter recognition, simple problem solving, pattern recognition and keyboard use.
Arcus Professional (4 disks) - Statistical package including Student's T-Test, F-Test, Z-Test, also linear, geometric & exponential regression analysis, Chi/Fishers/Irwins etc. (Buchan)
Childrens Games (ages 4-8) - hangman, alphabet, animals etc.
Eclipse - word and grammer game like hangman except guess words from document rather than letters from a word (J Higgins)
Flash Cards (4 disks) - 7,500 word vocabulary builder and spelling teacher (Advanced)
French Tutor - 1,648 French/English word combinations, 3,900 verb conjugations and 196 French/English phrase combinations.
Funnels & Buckets - Simple arithmetic tuition with arcade type action.
Fun with Designs - creative drawing program for young children. (Wescott)
Fun with Letters & Words - Educational games for the very young. (Wescott)
GCSE Physics / Computer Science / Mathematics (3 disks available separately) - exam revision.
German Tutor - 1,600 German/English word combinations, 3,875 verb conjugations and 160 German/English phrase combinations.
IQ Builder - intelligence testing.
Italian Tutor - 816 Italian/English word combinations, 1500 verb conjugations and 114 Italian/English phrase combinations.
Lisa's Adding & Quiz Machine - quiz generator and practice program for addition, subtraction.
Maths/Statistics - 26 maths routines including prime factors, vector analysis, linear interpolation, gaussian quadrature etc., plus 18 stats calculations including Mann-Whitney, Chi-square, students, T-test, multiple linear regression etc.
Memory Master - Improve memory powers with these techniques.
PC CAI - a computer assisted learning language that allows you to write tutorials, tests, rolling demos, etc.
PC Learning Games (4 disks) - series of programs for 2-8 year olds includes simple arithmetic, word & letter recognition, basic keyboard skills, colours & shapes (Protean)
PC Prompt - pop-up help with DOS commands/syntax.
Play 'n' Learn (ages 2-4) - for the very young, alphabet recognition, computer reaction etc, including Amandas Letter Lotto.
Spanish Tutor - 1,550 Spanish/English word combinations, 3,596 verb conjugations and 150 Spanish/English phrase combinations.
Tutor - introductions to computers, binary numbers and the CPU, input/output devices, Disk Operating System, subdirectory structures, batch files etc.
Whiz Quiz - arithmetic/elementary mathematics, self grading according to age of user.
Word Gallery - Flashcards with matching, missing letters, spelling, word guessing (EGA/VGA - Kinderware)
World Atlas - produces views and maps for areas around a chosen point, allowing selection of resolution size etc.

LANGUAGES/PROGRAMMING

A86/D86 - probably the best 8086 assembler/disassembler around.
Basic Aids (4 disks) - G.W. basic.
B-Window/C-Window - windowing utils for Basic & C.
C Tutorial - for beginners to advanced.
C Spot Run (2 disks) - window and menu utils for C programmers.
Hyperpad (5 disks) - similar to the Apple Mac's Hypercard, an object-oriented application development system, complete with more than two dozen personal applications (hard disk req. - Brightbill - Roberts)
Logo - Jem version of turtle-based graphics language, popular with children.
Modula 2 Compiler (3 disks) - new version (2.0A) of this flexible but very powerful programming language.
Modula 2 Tutorial (2 disks) - companion to the above.
MVP Forth (2 disks) - full implementation.
Pascal - three compilers on one disk, Tiny, Facillis & Visible.
Prolog - ADA implementation of 5th generation AI language.
Quickbasic - tools and utils.
SDA (2 disks) - design screens for data input (Basic).
Turbo C Tutor (2 disks)
Turbo Pascal Tutor (2 disks)
Tutbo Pascal Library (12 disks) - routines, programs, utils, statistics, sprites, animation, tools and much more.

UTILITIES

Ample Notice - appointments calendar, pop-up alarm clock, sideways addressing util for envelopes, can use data directly from the screen.

Automenu - popular front end allowing multiple levels of menu, password, uses minimum memory, network support etc. Magee.

Label Maker/News Editor - design labels and include graphics from NewsMaster graphics editor (Desai UK).
Professional Masterkey - disk utils like Nortons including file recovery, unerase etc.
Ram Test - chip diagnostics.
SimCGA - colour graphics simulator for Hercules cards, runs most CGA software.
Sydex Utilities (2 disks) - including Anadisk for analysing whats REALLY! on a disk, Teledisk which can make an image of a complete disk with sub-directories etc (even some protected disks) which you can then download or upload with the help of a modem, and utils and emulator to handle over 100 CP/M formats on your PC.
Vmix (2 disks) - multi-user operating system along the lines of unix, adjusts itself to 8088 or 80286.
Zapcode - (optionally) Memory resident printer control utility to select fonts, margins etc for use with dot-matrix, laser, ink-jet etc (Morton Utilities).

SPECIAL INTEREST

Astrology/Horoscopes - birth signs, zodiacs etc.
Bible (7 disks) - includes Samfindex to allow quick search and retrieval of words, phrases etc (Bayliss UK). Hard disk required

Crystal Ball - a computerized "psychic" makes predictions and answers (R.K. West)

ESIE - configurable expert system including example which works out childs illness from questions and answers.

Fortune Teller - divination system including One Card Fortune, Three Card, Detailed Card Layout, Quick Numerology, Dice etc (R.K. West)

Genealogy - EZ tree traces and plots your ancestral roots.
Handwriting Analyst - personality analyses system of graphology, often used when evaluating job candidates (Careersoft)
Handwriting/Numerology - Handwriting and numbers analysis for those who can feel the 'Vibrations'. Also includes Biorhythms.
Personal Tarot - enjoy professional quality Tarot card readings on your PC, easy to use, flexible, customizable with professional looking reports.
Pianoman - play, enter and save tunes, also construct stand alone tunes.
Procon Fortune - analysis of personality according to both Western & Eastern astrology. Also compatability ratings, etc.
The Diet Disk - has several calculations for average weight loss, calories needed etc and shopping list showing calories.

COMMUNICATIONS

Fido - very popular bulletin board system with E-mail facilities and network capabilities, several in use throughout UK/Europe/USA.
Kermit (2 disks) - file transfer between mainframes/PC's, many non-IBM machines catered for.
PC VT - DEC VT 102/100/52 terminal emulation with file transfer.
Odyssey - powerful but flexible package with many extras.
Wildcat (2 disks) - new bulletin board system which is easy to set up but very impressive.

SOFTWARE

PC File V	£89.00
As Easy As	£45.00
Automenu	£55.00
Page Financial Controller	£195.00
PC Outline	£59.00
Power Menu	£59.00
Freeway Cashbook V4	£49.95
Freeway Ledgermaster	£49.95
Freeway Payroll	£49.95
Ample Notice	£25.00
DR Dos V5	*ONLY* £49.95

Tec-Mouse - Microsoft compatible Serial Mouse with up to 1200 dpi resolution, mouse pad, pocket, pop-up menu compiler and library, Professional Paint software *ONLY* £29.95

All prices exclude carriage and VAT

MISCELLANEOUS

Disk Copy Service - over 300 formats of floppy, tel for details.
Disk Duplication - we can provide small to medium sized jobs (ie 100-10,000) for as little as 20p inc. media - 5.25" and 45p inc. media - 3.5", many formats available. Call for quote (prices exc. carriage/VAT)
Library Additions - if you have written a shareware program and would like us to distribute it, please forward a copy with description for consideration.
Support - We will be pleased to help you to load and run all the programs we distribute, but we cannot give support, or written documentation/manuals etc for un-registered shareware, as this would be a breach of the author's copyright.

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What's the use?

You'll find all sorts in the public domain. Some programs you couldn't live without, some come in handy every now and again and some are completely hopeless! Adam Waring presents a round-up of the silliest, most pointless PD around...

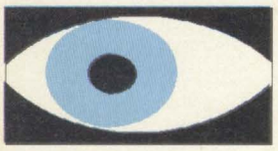
Why do people buy Newton's cradles and knitted toilet roll covers? At best they're interesting novelties, but they have about as much scope in the usefulness stakes as a recently-deceased moggie. The public domain has always been the place to find things that aren't mainstream – no-one's going to be prepared to fork out hefty sums for a useless piece of software, no matter how novel or funny it may be. But if it's free...?

And there's plenty of pap available! It's not that the programs are badly-written necessarily, but there's software out there that serves no conceivable purpose whatsoever. From household pet simulators, to weather predictors where the only certainty is that they're wrong. Whatever you *don't* want, it's all there! So get ready for the run-down on software that's so useless, it's essential!

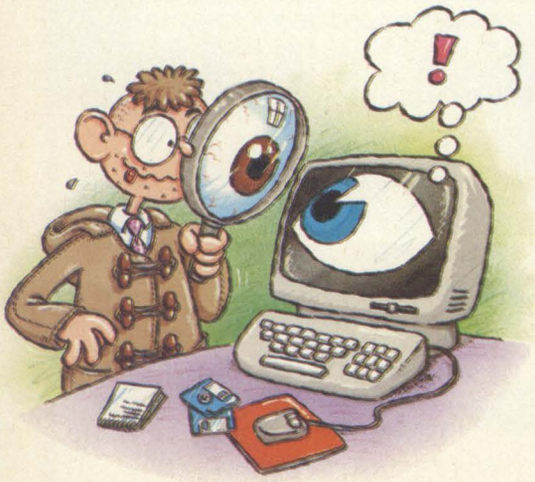
Eye (PD)

PC • Shareware Support BBS ☎ 0494 431861

A bit of a spooky one, this. A huge eye appears slap bang in the middle of the PC's screen. It looks around randomly and occasionally the pupil dilates for a couple of seconds. There's no user-interaction whatsoever. It's really quite extraordinary...



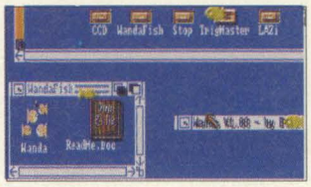
An eye appears on your PC's screen and, er, looks around a bit



Wanda Fish (PD)

Amiga • PDQ#11 • George Thompson Services, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

Aren't goldfish boring? All they do all day is swim around an eight-inch diameter, water-filled glass bowl, with nothing more to look forward to than a flaked insect or two for their tea. Then again, some people *like* watching the most stupid of creatures aimlessly swim around in circles mouthing the word 'Bob'.



Workbench becomes an aquarium, and you don't have to clean the screen out

If this sounds like you, then you may be interested in *Wanda Fish*. A school of goldfish swim about the screen, blowing the occasional bubble. They tend to stick in individual windows, but will occasionally take the plunge and swim into another one. Move the mouse pointer near to a fish and it will follow it around for a bit. Maybe it thinks it's a worm or something.

Amiga Emulator (PD)

ST • ME61 • Merton PD, 10 Grasmere Avenue, London SW19 3DX

Any ST owner will tell you that an Amiga emulator is the most useless piece of software they could possibly own for their machine. However, could an emulation of the multi-tasking marvel, with all of its custom graphics and sound chips be possible?

An Amiga emulator on the ST. Can it really be possible? Well, no, actually

No!

On loading *Amiga Emulator*, the Amiga's familiar Workbench screen comes up. So far so good, but apart from that, it doesn't actually do an awful lot. There are various folders on-screen on which you can click, usually resulting in a simulated Guru error. And that's it. Maybe it's all just a programmers' joke, or something.

DriveIFF (PD)

Amiga • 01 For Amiga BBS ☎ 071-377 1358

There are various programs available in the public domain to display pictures in interesting and novel ways. But this one really takes the biscuit, and we're talking chocolate Hob Nobs here.

The IFF image is converted into a surreal 3D environment (ie, not really 3D at all, it just looks a bit weird). You sit in the cockpit of some imaginary vehicle and drive around the picture. The enlarged pixels rush towards you as you zoom around at high speeds.

Visit meticulously-drawn, but completely unrecognisable, pictures

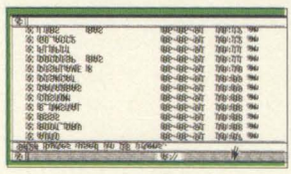
It's all very well done – an inertia system controls your movement and there are some great engine sounds as you explore the lay of the land. It's just that every single picture you load into it, no matter how pretty it may have been originally, ends up looking like all the others – a lot of brown and green squares that are completely unrecognisable.

Flipit (PD)

ST • Hitchhiker's Utilities • Office Choice, Suite 14, Aron House, Town Centre, Cumbernauld G67 1EJ ☎ 0236 737901

Most of the programs mentioned in this feature are simply useless. This goes one step further as it is actually *anti*-useful. It makes your ST harder to use!

No doubt it's all very clever, turning the ST's screen upside down and programming the mouse to respond to your commands in reverse, but it doesn't make your life any easier.



Don't try this standing on your head – it still doesn't make sense

Flipit works with any program that runs under the standard GEM operating system, so you can use it with your favourite word processor. Excellent for writing letters to your Australasian pen pals.

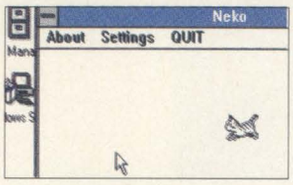
Neko (PD)

PC • Shareware Support BBS ☎ 0494 431861

The problem with pet pussy cats is that no matter how cute they may look they always leave hairs all over the sofa, need feeding and claw the curtains to shreds. What better way to get around the problem

than with a kitten simulator? You can have hours of fun with your on-screen pet – and no funny smells.

This program runs under Microsoft Windows. The cat chases the mouse pointer around the screen as you move it. Should you move it out of the bounds of the window, then the kitten sits at the edge, pawing against the side of the window, as if waiting to get out. After a while, it gets bored, yawns and goes to sleep. Moving the pointer quickly wakes it with a start and it will become active once again. All this with great little comic expressions.



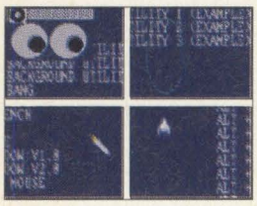
No need for expensive tins of Whiskas when *Neko*'s your pet

There's even more fun to be had with Little Puskins. Try clicking on the cat as it chases you; it gets frightened and runs off. Brilliant! You can spend hours teasing the poor little mite.

Pegasus Workbench Hacks (PD)

Amiga • 1570 • 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH ☎ 0924 366982

For real fans of the ridiculous, there's a whole disk of silliness. *Pegasus Workbench Hacks* is a collection of nearly 60 utilities that have no purpose whatsoever. They've surpassed themselves here!



Workbench has gone barmy! Do lots of unusual things to it

There are all sorts on this disk. Most of them do some weird screen effect within Workbench such as wobbling the screen about or making the mouse pointer behave strangely.

Here are some of the zanier delights you'll find on the disk:

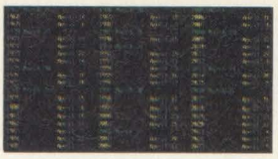
- An intelligent mouse-seeking missile can be unleashed, that follows the mouse pointer all over the screen, exploding when it makes contact.
- A *Lunar Lander*, where you have to land your inertia-sensitive craft on top of a window.
- A pair of eyes that follow the progress the pointer all over the screen.
- Bubbles that float up the screen while you work.

The rest are in a similar vein, all completely stupid and all totally brilliant.

Easters (PD)

PC • Exploring Time • Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

You know how it is. When you wake up with a start, the sheets are soaked with sweat and you're heart's beating 13 to the dozen. You'll get no more sleep until you find the answer to the question that's been nagging away at you for weeks: what date does Easter Sunday fall on in 1998?



Find out when those scrummy choccie eggs are due with *Easters*

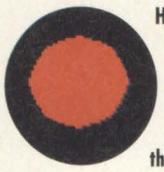
Luckily, you have *Easters* to put your mind at rest once and for all. It'll tell you the date of every single Easter from the 1900 to 2199. Tap in the year and a list of Easters, from that date on, appears on the screen.

(It's the 12th April, by the way.)

Babyball (PD)

ST • EDU07 • ST Club, 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham NG1 1LX ☎ 0602 410241

This must have some use, it simply must. No one writes a program that really does so little. The question is: what the hell is it for?



Hmm. A ball that rolls around the screen. It's not big, not clever and not really all that much use

A ball appears at the bottom of the screen and rolls upwards. This continues until a key is pressed, whereupon the ball appears from another side of the screen in a different colour.

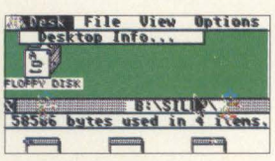
We asked the office for some ideas as to what it could possibly be for. These are the (printable) theories put forward:

- A psychic power tester. Focus your mind on the colour and the side of the screen from which the ball will appear.
- A random what-limb-to-put-where *Twister* game playing aid. No need to spin the spinner – let the computer choose for you.
- A non-violent, right-on game for social workers. You guess where the ball comes from and then follow up with a group discussion.

Er, that's it. Not terribly good, are they?

Silly Utilities (PD)

ST • DMG23 • ST Club, 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham, NG1 1LX ☎ 0602 410241



There's all sorts of nonsense going on with *Silly Utilities*

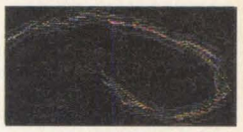
Most of this disk is stuffed full of serious and genuinely useful utilities. Luckily there are four 'silly' programs to save the day which all tinker around with the Gem desktop in some way:

- *Fuji* gives a multi-coloured strobing Atari logo in the top corner of the screen. Nice.
- *Magic* – a trail of pretty twinkling stars follow the cursor round the screen. Ahhhh, it's so pretty.
- *Physical* endows your mouse with the combined effects of gravity and the characteristics of a power ball. The result is that it's almost impossible to click on the files or applications you want. Most excellent, dudes!
- *Django* supposedly 'kills' the ST. Mine's still OK, though. Can't they do anything right?

Pixxt (PD)

Amiga • PDQ#12 • George Thompson Services, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts AL9 6JB ☎ 0707 664654

Bonfire night may be a way off yet, but fear not – *Pixxt* displays a sparkler-like image on the screen. Move the mouse pointer around and a trail of pretty colours follow it. Ohh, it's *sooo* pretty.



Make pretty patterns with *Pixxt*. And that's about all

Weather (PD)

PC • C1211 • Testware UK Ltd, 46 The Avenue, Harrogate, Yorkshire ☎ 0423 886415

Who's your favourite weatherman? There's some choice: cuddly Ian McGaskill, dashing Francis Wilson or boring, but dependable, John Kettley. But soon it could be the PC you tune into to find out whether to wear wellies or flip flops.

Or perhaps not.

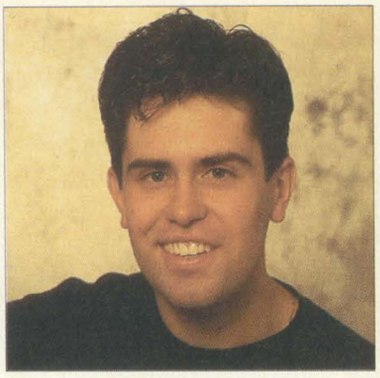
All it takes to predict the weather with are a few simple questions

Weather attempts to predict the weather, surprisingly enough. Forget the Cray super-computer that the Met office uses, analysing data from weather satellites the globe over and processing millions of calculations to predict rain, hail or snow. All you really need to do is ask three questions.

- Has there been an increase in pressure lately?
- Has it got warmer in the last couple of days?
- Has it rained recently?

From this, your PC will tell you what the weather's going to be like today. Saves the bother of getting up and looking out of the window. PD

Home & Education



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Music, art, learning... no, you don't have to travel back to ancient Greece to find these things. They're all in the public domain, and under review in this very section. Dave Golder, method reviewer, acts the dunce...

Andy's Word Games

(Shareware)

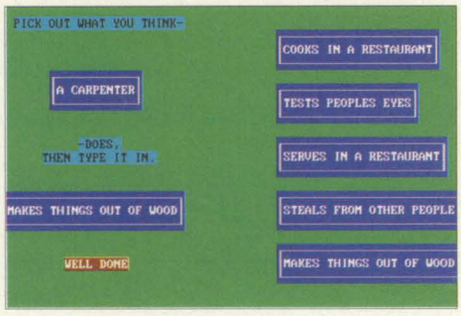
PC • 512K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk C1332 • Registration fee: £5 • Testware, 46 The Avenue, Harrogate North Yorkshire ☎ 0423 886415

For some strange reason, there are a lot of educational PD games that have some name in the title that is never referred to again on the disk. *Amy's First Primer*, *Amanda's Letter Lotto*, *Brandon's Lunchbox* and now *Andy's Word Games*. And, also like those other disks, *Andy's Word Games* is a compilation.

There are 10 games on the disk, all pretty much in the same vein. Aimed at five to eight-year olds, they aim to help with spelling and broaden a child's vocabulary and understanding of words.

A lot of the games are based on the same multi-choice format. So, for example, in *Opposites*, a child has to choose which of five possible alternatives is the real antonym to a provided key word. The answers have to be typed in rather than selected with a mouse or by pressing a number key, which is handy for helping the child to learn how to spell. There are ten questions and the program provides a running score of how well the child is doing. If they get an answer wrong then the program points out which is the correct one.

Occupations, where you have to match the job title with the work involved, *Synonyms*, in which you have to find similar words, *Odd Word Out* which is pretty self-explanatory, and *Verbs*, which involves deciding which noun you would do what verb (ie, wearing a scarf and not a kettle), are all based on the same format.



This is the standard multi-choice format for most of *Andy's Word Games*, this one being *Occupations*

In *Sentence* you are given a list of words and have to arrange them in order to form a sentence. Simple maybe, but a valuable educational aid.

Comparison is based on the good-better-best principle. So, for example, the program asks you which is the fastest out of a bicycle, car or aeroplane or the smallest out of an elephant, a horse or a mouse.

Plurals is simply a case of typing in the correct plural spelling of a word provided by the computer.

Word Find is a quite tough word search game with a grid full a letters containing words you have to find. This game is hampered slightly by the fact that it is cursor-controlled; a mouse would have been handier.

The presentation is clear, if a little unexciting, and the games are dead easy to play, so probably won't need much parental guidance. The games are all linked by a menu-selection system which is all fine and dandy except that there is no way to quit back to it if you are in the middle of a game; you either have to complete the game or reset the computer. Another irritation is that at the start of each game you are asked to fill in your name; this is one of those things that you should be able to do once from the menu screen.

Despite these drawbacks *Andy's Word Games* remains a worthwhile little collection especially at a registration fee of measly £5.

PC **75%**

The wordsearch in *Andy's Word Games* is pretty difficult even for experienced spellers

F is for fire, as you will discover if you get the pieces of the picture in the right order in *Alphabet Mix*

Alphabet Mix (Licenceware)

ST • Disk SES-0005 • £2.50 • 512K • Caledonia PDL, Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

Imagine that your child is trying to learn the alphabet, and you've bought them a snazzy picture book of the A-is-for-Apple, B-is-for-Bear, C-is-for-Car accident variety. Unfortunately your dog has got hold of it and ripped the pages to ribbons. Now if your child wants to find out what D stands for they are going to have to put the pieces together first.

This, basically, is the premise of *Alphabet Mix*. The program features 26 pictures, one, would you believe for each letter of the alphabet. They are displayed to the left of the screen, while to the right is a an empty grid of either four or eight strips; this is the difficulty level. You select which picture you want, click on Go, and it divides into the appropriate number of strips, all mixed up, on the left-hand grid. Your mission is place the strips in the right order.

This is done simply by clicking on a strip with the cursor and dragging it into what you reckon is the correct position on the (now empty) left-hand grid. When you think you've got everything in the right order you click on Stop. The program then checks out the picture; if any of the strips have been incorrectly placed then they are

dumped back on the right-hand grid for you to have another try. If they're all in the right order then it plays you a rather nifty (and mercifully brief) version of *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow*.

The pictures themselves are bright and well-drawn but there is a strange mix of styles in the overall presentation. The Start and Stop buttons feature snazzy sports cars while Doc from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* congratulates you when you get the pieces in the right order. Talk about trying to cover all tastes. The program has three banks of pictures – A to I, J to R and S to Z – which are loaded randomly at the start of each game. There does seem to be a slight bug which means that occasionally it reckons you've got a picture wrong when it is, in fact, in the right order, but this is quite rare, and barely detracts from the overall enjoyment.

A dwarf wanders on to congratulate you when you get a picture in the right order in *Alphabet Mix*

ST 80%

Football League Editor (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, Co Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091-587 1195

This is what the public domain is all about. A program written by someone for his own use, that the writer has released as PD just because he thought he may as well share it. It's unlikely to appeal to anyone but real footie nuts, making it not commercially viable, but a real treat for fans.

Football League Editor is a program for recording every game that has been played in any leagues you choose and keeping track of the accompanying league tables. This requires a lot of scouring newspaper sports pages, of course, but for the fan this is a minor irritation. What the program provides is a handy framework for maintaining the information.

To begin you have feed in the league information. To do this you just

cont. on p90

Is the mouse mightier than the felt tip pen? Paint packages for the very young

If you've got a budding young Picasso in the family who tends to end up with more paint all over their face, the dog and the best tablecloth than on the paper, what they need is a specially-designed art package...

Splash (Licenceware)

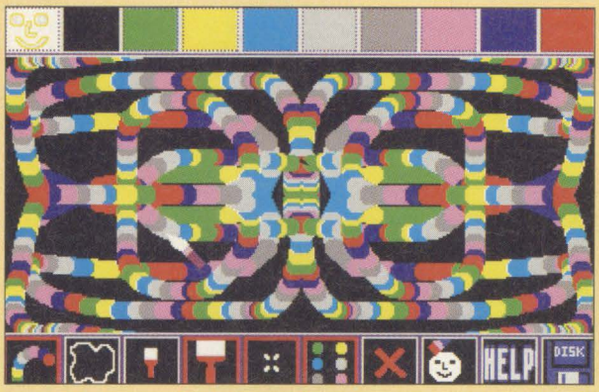
ST • 512K • Budgie Disk BPR 17 • £3.95 • 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney Street, Nottingham NG1 1LX ☎ 0602 410241

Art packages for kids are usually pretty basic affairs – a few colours, a couple of tools and two sizes of brush. Things like colour cycling, the ability to alter palettes, defining areas of the screen as brushes which can then be flipped or mirrored are far too complex for kids to understand, surely.

Budgie Licenceware doesn't think so, and reckons that a child of three could handle them. And to prove it Budgie has produced an excellent beginners' art package called *Splash*.

It's just bursting with functions that make creating artwork a real pleasure, and kids'll love the stunning, colourful effects they can create with a few simple clicks and drags of the mouse. To be fair, a three-year old is going to need some parental guidance; although the whole thing is mouse operated, working out where to click is going to be bewildering at first.

The layout is exceptionally attractive, but still clearly laid-out. The icons along the bottom actually become animated when you enter the icon bar area, which helps make them much more descriptive. For example, the icon for the mirror tool – which means that when you draw a line on one side of the screen a symmetrical line of the same colour is automatically drawn on the opposite side – shows two opposite lines being continually redrawn.



A mixture of mirror brush and scroll colours can achieve results like this

The impressive range of options and tools include those for:

- Drawing two different thicknesses of line
- Drawing boxes and circles
- Flood filling areas of pictures
- Creating brushes (ie, designating an area of the screen that can be picked up and used like a multi-coloured brush)
- Colour cycling

This last feature is the real tour de force. It enables you to draw a multi-coloured line on which the colours change in a set sequence to give the impression of simple animation. The only real problem is that it is so easy to create attractive abstract patterns, that kids'll be tempted to spend their whole time drawing these and not trying to draw something a bit more realistic.

Pictures can be saved to disk or sent to a printer. The clicking, unfortunately, is a bit sluggish, and there's no Quit option to get back to the GEM worktop. But these really are minor quibbles and are more than outweighed by the sheer quality and child-friendliness of the program. *Splash* is the kids' paint package that parents just won't be able to stop playing with!

ST 85%

KidPaint (Shareware)

Amiga • 512K • Disk 1706 • Plus compatible • Registration fee: £5 • Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, Co Durham SR8 1NZ ☎ 091-587 1195

KidPaint is a bit of an odd one. As an art package it offers some quite advanced features, such as a symmetry brush (which means that the pattern you draw in one area is repeated at regular intervals around the screen) and a cycle brush (which enables you to draw multi-coloured lines) but it lacks such basics as Draw Box, Draw Circle or even Draw Line.

This means that trying to draw such standard kids' favourites as houses and lorries becomes extremely frustrating. OK, you might argue that with a pen and paper kids don't have a Draw Line feature, but they do have rulers and drawing with a crayon is a darned sight easier than with a mouse.

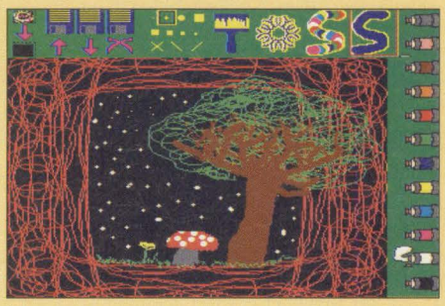
It has to be admitted that *KidPaint* is very nicely-presented. The 12 colours from which you choose are represented as tubes of paint, and the other icons are big and bright. It also speaks to you when you make a choice of colour or brush, but this rapidly becomes irritating, and slows the whole program down; luckily you can switch this feature off.

There are four thicknesses of brush, which is reasonable, and some strange slanted brushes (including an X-shaped one) which seem pretty pointless except for enabling you to write italic letters (but how many young kids would want to?) There is also a flood fill feature.

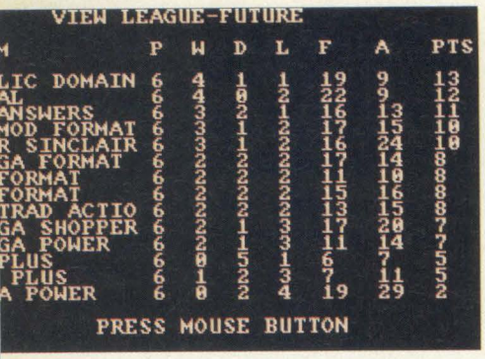
You can't choose two brushes at a time which is a shame; it means that you can't use the symmetry brush in colour cycle mode to produce some really pretty patterns.

Overall, *KidPaint* is a pretty frustrating, sluggish program with which it next to impossible to produce anything worth saving for future viewing. Save the £5 registration fee for a mega-set of felt tip pens.

AMIGA 58%



***KidPaint*: Nice lay-out, but almost impossible to use**


VIEW LEAGUE-FUTURE
M P W D L F A PTS
LIC DOMAIN 6 4 1 1 19 9 13
AL 6 4 0 2 22 9 12
ANSWERS 6 3 2 1 16 13 11
MOD FORMAT 6 3 1 2 17 15 10
R SINCLAIR 6 3 1 2 16 24 10
GA FORMAT 6 2 2 2 17 14 8
FORMAT 6 2 2 2 11 10 8
FORMAT 6 2 2 2 15 16 8
TRAD ACTIO 6 2 2 2 13 15 8
GA SHOPPER 6 2 1 3 17 20 7
GA POWER 6 2 1 3 11 14 7
PLUS 6 0 5 1 6 7 5
PLUS 6 1 2 3 7 11 5
A POWER 6 0 2 4 19 29 2
PRESS MOUSE BUTTON

Public Domain **comes top in the Future five-a-side league (thanks to some massaging of the figures)**

t. from 89

click on Create League, then type in its name, the number of teams and then name the individual teams. You can keep information on as many leagues as you like but you will have to create a data disk on which to save the data as *FLE* can only handle one set of information at a time.

Next you click on Edit Scores, tell the computer who is playing whom on a certain date, then when the scores become available you can fill them in. The program then automatically works out the league position (using the three points for a win, one point for a draw system) which you can view by clicking on View Scores (see – it's all pretty self-explanatory for those lazy types who tend to by-pass documentation files). You can also edit scores or league tables which is handy if, say, Arsenal suddenly have a few points taken away from them by the league for being so boring. (Or if you make a mistake, of course.)

It's not stunning, and the presentation is, to be kind, utilitarian. But it's free, and does its job faultlessly, so any Amiga-owning footie fan could do worse than check it out. It beats tearing the league tables out of the *News of the World* and sticking them in a scrapbook.

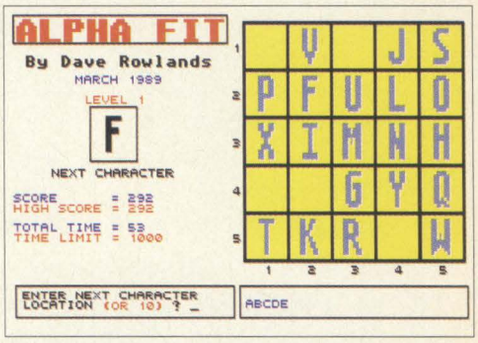
AMIGA **75%**

Alpha Fit (PD)

ST • 512K • Disk EDU 676ST • Riverdene, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

"Along the corridor and up the stairs," as my old maths teacher always used to tell me. No, I didn't want to go to the toilet, that was just his little memory jogger for remembering that when you read grid references the X value (the one along the bottom) always comes first, followed by the Y value (the one up the side). It's a pity that no-one told the person responsible for launching the so-called educational debacle known as *Alpha Fit* on to an unsuspecting public.

The program is, frankly, appalling. Ostensibly it is designed to help young kids learn the alphabet, and it just about works on that level. But its



Among *Alphabet Mix*'s many less-than-wonderful features is a timer which is not dependent on time

Making beautiful music together? Pianoman tries its best with a soundcard-less PC

Pianoman (Shareware)

PC • 256K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Registration fee: £25 • Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

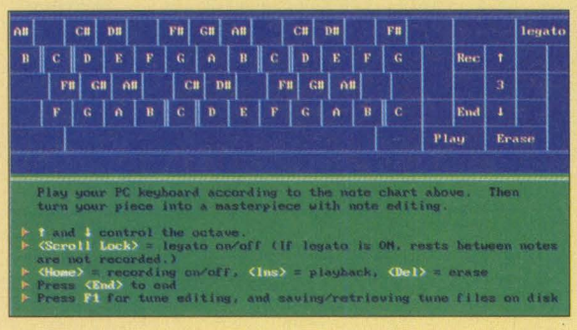
A PC without a soundcard has the musical capabilities of whistling kettle. Yet here comes a package which enables you to compose and playback well over two hours of music. And as if that weren't enough (to send you screaming to the chemist's to buy a pair of earplugs) it also boasts a form of polyphonic sound! Intrigued? Bemused? The read on...

Pianoman has two main functions. At its most basic it turns the PC into a musical keyboard offering three octaves, including sharps. So, for example, the Q key is the note C, the W key is D while 2 is C Sharp. The keyboard layout is displayed in the top half of the screen. It produces is the usual 'beep' sound, so now you can play simple, one-note-at-a-time tunes like you've got the latest upgrade of a Stylophone.

You can raise or lower the octave with the cursor keys (the program is not mouse-compatible). By toggling the Legato option, you should also be able to decide whether the note cuts off when you take your finger off a key, or whether it continues to drone until you hit another one. Unfortunately it doesn't seem to work, and guess which option you're stuck with?

If you actually manage to play a tune you want to keep, you can press the Home key to record it. And now the fun really starts, because with a stroke of the F1 key a new menu section appears at the bottom of the screen and you're into Editing mode. The top of the screen also changes to display a grid. One of the most disconcerting things about the program is that there isn't a musical stave in sight. All the notes, and information about them – such as duration, staccato value and octave – are fed into the squares on the grid. Although only 60 squares appear on-screen at any one time, you scroll up and down to reveal up to 30,000 notes!

There are, in fact, four editing menu bars which you can call up in rotation, and the range of options they offer is very impressive. *Pianoman* treats editing music in much the same way as word processor treats text so that as well as being able to change the values of an individual note you can also denote blocks that you can cut, copy and paste into other parts of the song. You can make changes throughout the whole song (universal changes) or just in a selected block, such as raising all the notes by an octave, speeding up the tempo and so on.


legato
Rec
End
Play
Erase
Play your PC keyboard according to the note chart above. Then turn your piece into a masterpiece with note editing.
↑ and ↓ control the octave.
<Scroll Lock> = legato on/off (If legato is ON, rests between notes are not recorded.)
<Home> recording on/off, <Ins> = playback, <Del> = erase
Press <End> to end
Press F1 for tune editing, and saving/retrieving tune files on disk

At its most basic *Pianoman* turns your PC into a (bog-standard) musical keyboard. This screen shows which keys to press to play various notes

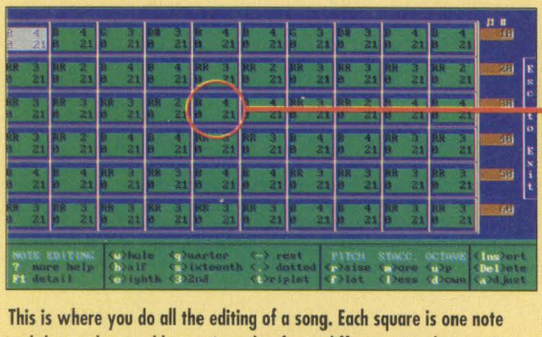
The problem is that this still operates on a one-note-at-time basis which can be pretty dull (especially if you want to compose a 30,000 note opus). But *Pianoman* offers you a facility which at least gives the impression of complementary notes; it achieves this by cutting the time it takes a note to play up into slices – up to four per note – then playing the different sounds rapidly in sequence. The result is almost successful, but still a bit rough. There are a number of tunes provided as standard with the program which have been written using this technique and you can load them up to find out the limits of *Pianoman*'s capabilities.

You can save any work you do, but *Pianoman* goes one step further. It provides a program called *Piano Player* which will convert your songs into other formats including:

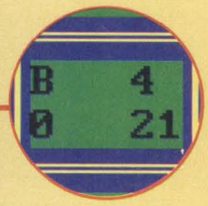
- A self-running program
- A format which is compatible with *Turbo Pascal* programs
- A format which is compatible with BASIC programs

In terms of what it achieves *Pianoman* is, despite a couple of annoying bugs, a very impressive program. It is fairly straightforward to use and the documentation is excellent and very helpful. But the program is working with very limited resources (ie, the PC's built-in sound), and no amount of ingenuity can cover up its drawbacks. At £25 for just the right to use it, it's one for the committed only.

PC **75%**



This is where you do all the editing of a song. Each square is one note and the numbers and letters in each refer to different note characteristics



The figure in the top left is the note, top right is the octave, bottom left is the duration and bottom right is the stacatto value

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understanding of grid reference systems is so far off the mark that it could end up confusing kids just as much as helping them.

Basically it features a grid of 25 squares containing (nearly) all the letters of the alphabet jumbled up into any old order (sorry Z, no room, so *Alpha Fit* just ignores your existence altogether). You have to find the letters in alphabetical order, selecting each by entering its co-ordinates. Unfortunately, not only do you have to feed in the Y co-ordinates first, but the numbers up the side go from zero at the top to five at the bottom, while along the bottom they go from zero at the left to five at the right. Both are completely wrong for grid reference systems; the zero values should both be at the bottom left. Just what is this program trying to teach our kids?

There are a variety of levels. On the easiest the program tells you which letter to look for next. In level two you get no clues. In the hardest levels certain letters are blanked out, and only reveal themselves for a second when you feed in their co-ordinates, so you have to try to remember which letters are where.

There is also a 'Timer' which doesn't seem to have anything to do with time at all; it just takes points away with each guess and you have to try to leave as many points at the end of the game as possible. Fair enough, but calling it a timer is a bit sloppy.

Graphically it is well-designed, and it's pretty friendly to use. But its whole premise is so fundamentally dodgy that really it is more dangerous than helpful.

ST **45%**

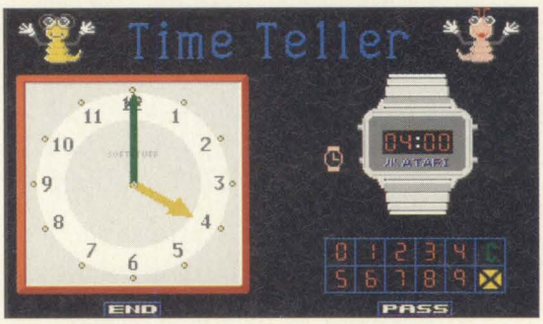
Betty and Bubby (PD)

ST • 512K • Disk EDU676 • Riverdene, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

Buddy and Betty are no ordinary bookworms; they only spend two-thirds of their time buried in books, the rest of the time they either hang around clocks or go on train journies to the countryside. Not that they're wasting their lives on frivolities, since their main aim in life is to help make the process of learning about maths and counting a less dreary experience for very young kids.

The program is divided into three games which you select from a rather unpromisingly bare menu screen. But fear not, because *Betty and Bubby* is proof that you shouldn't judge a program by its menu screen – all three games are graphically excellent and play pretty good.

Train (two of the games aren't titled so the names are mine – don't expect anything too exciting) is an addition game. You have to put together trains using carriages containing various numbers of passengers (all of whom bear a remarkable resemblance to Betty and Bubby). The program will ask you, say, to make a train to pull 23 passengers using only carriages that contain four of five passengers. So, in this case, you would tap in five three times and four twice on your keyboard. The corresponding carriages will appear on screen. Get it right and the train whistles, then you're on to the next problem. Get it wrong and the program tells you the right answer.



Cute bookworms *Betty and Bubby* are ready to give you some applause every time you guess the time correctly

The trains look wonderful and the whistling is pretty doody. It's just a pity that it keeps presenting you with the same problems – there only seems to be about five or six different combinations, so you soon learn the solutions by heart.

In *Time Teller* the task is to work out what the time is according to an analogue clock face (y'know, the big hand and little hand variety of clocks) and re-enter it in digits on a digital watch (which looks like the sort they used to wear in *The Professionals*). It's simple but excellently-presented, with very well-drawn graphics, and sparse but effective use of sound fx. Best of all is that Betty an Bubby sit at the top of the screen and congratulate you when you get the time right in a brief but quite charming piece of animation.

Best of the bunch, however, is *Bookworm*. Betty has hidden herself inside a book and Bubby has to find her, which isn't easy as there are 100 books lying around. Luckily, they are arranged very neatly in a ten-by-ten grid so you can tell Bubby where to

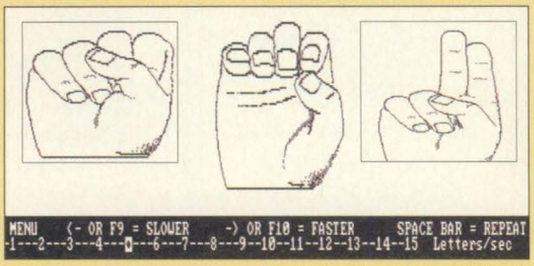
Signing of the times – your PC can give you a hand with learning sign languag

Learning sign language can be a drag if you have no-one to practise with but your PC might have the solution...

FSpell (Shareware)

PC • 256K • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk 2416/PA • Registration fee: $15 • Softcell, 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT ☎ 0443 238630

FSpell, so says its documentation, is not so much a tutorial program as a practice partner. It's all very well learning how to form the letters yourself, but deciphering what another signer has to say is another matter altogether.

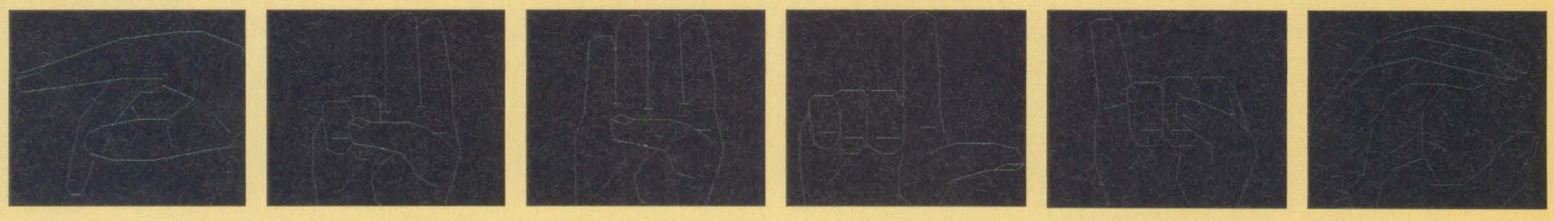


***FSpell*: a sort of computer substitute for a real partner if you can't find anyone with which to practice your signing**

The program features some very clearly-drawn black and white pictures of hands signing letters. Basically it signs away to its heart's content while you have to try to guess what it's saying. 'Guess' being the operative word since, except on the easiest level which deals with single letters, you're never told what the program is signing. OK, so it covers itself by saying that it is mainly intended for practice, and you can use the repeat function to see a word as many times as you like, but without knowing whether you are translating it correctly what's the point?

This is a shame, because in many other ways the program is well-thought out. It covers everything from simple letter drills to quite complex words and even short phrases and sentences – these are always shown as a series of letters, though, not as phonemes, or elements of sound. This limits the usefulness of the program since most signing actually works on this more complex level where one sign stands for a whole syllable or word. Trying to have a conversation one letter at a time is like trying to paint a wall with a toothbrush.

However, you can choose to practise various prefixes and suffixes, such as pre-, sub- and -ment, so that you become familiar with



***Learn to Sign* suffers from the same problem as *FSpell* in that it only teaches you individual letters, not whole words. I mean, just look what finger contortions you have to go through just to spell out the nam**

look by using grid references (and unlike *Alpha Fit*, also reviewed this month, it uses the correct X,Y co-ordinate system).

So you start off by choosing a random book by typing in the co-ordinates. Bubby makes his way to that book. If it's the wrong one, the journey has not been completely wasted; a thermometer at the side indicates roughly how close you are. When you finally find the correct book the thermometer explodes with excitement and Betty reveals herself and says, "Found me!"

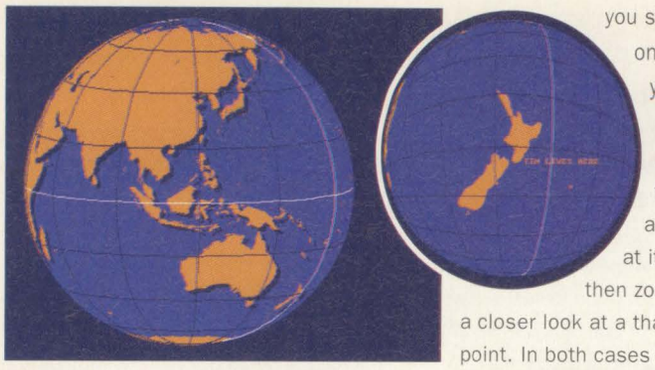
Again, it features excellent graphics and sound effects, and though a little slow and the thermometer is not always as helpful as it could be, has enough playability to give it lasting appeal.

ST 83%

DrawMap (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Disk V263 • Plus compatible • PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 2YD ☎ 0702 466933

If you order *DrawMap* from a PD library you know exactly what you're going to get; the title of the disk says it all, really. It draws maps.



***DrawMap*: you can get a complete global view, then zoom in and even annotate the maps**

It operates in high-res, so the myopic among you might want to pop down to the optician so that you can read the menu bar. But it needs to be in eye-strain mode so that the outlines of countries and continents can be drawn in detail; indeed, in World View mode it actually manages to include quite a few of those tiny islands in the South Pacific.

The program produces maps either in flat, rectangular or global form. Either way you start with a flat map of the entire world. From there you can either draw a box around the area you want to see in more detail or view the world as you would see it from space (ie, as a globe). To do this you simply click on the point you want to have at the centre of the globe as you look at it. You can then zoom in to get a closer look at a that central point. In both cases – with flat or global map, you are quite limited in how far you can magnify the image; a map of the UK filling the screen is about as small as you can go.

The maps are drawn in orange on blue, which, luckily, is a pleasant combination as you can't alter the colours easily from within the program. You can also choose to put grids and shadows on the maps to enhance the image. There is also the option to write brief pieces of text and draw lines which can be positioned anywhere you like on the maps. They will only remain on the actual map on which they are placed, though; alter the view in any way, no matter how slight, and they are lost. Maps can be saved as IFF files or printed out.

There is also no detail about inland features. The program only deals with coastal outlines, which rather limits its usefulness. And while it works as fast as it can, waiting for the maps to draw can sometimes be a bit tedious. *DrawMap*, ultimately, is more an executive toy than anything really useful.

AMIGA 70%

Anagrams (PD)

ST • 1Mb • Disk EDU886ST • Riverdene, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

'Giving him the serpent.' Seven letters, ends with T. Hmm. What *could* it be? I know. Let's check out *Anagrams* on the ST.

Well, in this case we're in luck. Load up *Anagrams*, type in serpent and, seconds later it informs you that 'present' and 'repents' both consist of the same letters (present is the correct answer for those of you who hadn't guessed). But that's really about as impressive as *Anagrams* gets. Here's just a few of things it can't do, that you would really need it to do if you were a crossword fanatic:

- Find anagrams from jumbled letters
- Find anagrams of words that are

st so long as you don't want to say anything too complicated, that is...

certain letter combinations. You can either set which prefixes and suffixes or words beginning with certain letters you want to practise, or let the program decide what you're going to brush up on for you. It seems to have a pretty varied vocabulary, which is essential.

FSpell's presentation is pretty basic, but that doesn't mean unfriendly. The program is easy to get up and running even for the most technophobic technophobe. But to get any real benefit from *FSpell* you really need to have mastered the art of sign language to a fair degree of success already.

PC 73%

Learn To Sign (Shareware)

PC • CGA/EGA/VGA • Disk 4329/VU • Registration fee $10 • Softcell, 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT ☎ 0443 238630

Learn To Sign is a very different program from *FSpell* both in terms of presentation and format, though it also concentrates solely on the signs for single letters and not whole words.

As opposed to simply being an electronic practice partner it actually attempts to teach you a bit about signing. The main sections of the program work the opposite way to *FSpell*. You type in a letter or a word and the corresponding sign-letters pop-up on your monitor. There is a quiz section which works the other way; the program signs a letter and you have to type it in on the keyboard.

The hands are not particularly well-drawn, resembling wire-frame bunches of of bananas that have been involved in a rather nasty freight accident, but they do the job (just about). They are also in colour; which colour is up to you as *Learn To Sign* offers you a whole range of customisation facilities. You can change the colour of the text, the hands and the backgrounds, alter the size of the hands until they are so big the fingers vanish off the side of the screen (very handy) and set how long the hands remain on-screen.

For the really ambitious novice, there is the Textfile feature. Run this and the program will translate any text file you have available into sign language! As the program doesn't feature any other testing on recognition of words and phrases, this provides a good do-it-yourself version, and is especially handy if you make a print-out of the text file first for reference.

While not as professionally presented as *FSpell*, it actually wins out on usefulness, and the registration fee is less ($10 or about £6).

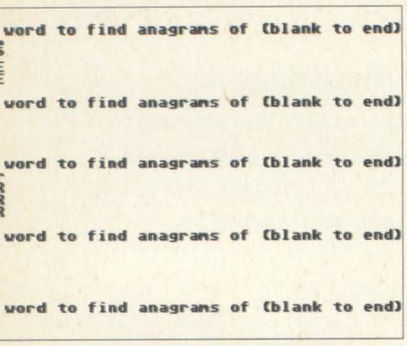
PC 76%

s esteemed journal. The program can convert text files to sign language, so make sure you choose something short or you could take until the middle of the next century to translate it all

not in its dictionary (and there are a fair number of them – excellent, monitor, deviate and other hardly-obscurities)
- Find anagrams of multiple words
- Find anagrams of names

In fact it's pretty useless, has the most basic of presentation and is not very friendly. If it can't find an anagram it doesn't apologise or even inform you of the fact, it just prompts you for another word (which it probably won't be able to find).

And this tosh needs a whole megabyte to run?


word to find anagrams of (blank to end)
word to find anagrams of (blank to end)
word to find anagrams of (blank to end)
word to find anagrams of (blank to end)
word to find anagrams of (blank to end)

Here are some of the words that *Anagram* actually managed to find anagrams of...

ST 50%

Big Top Fun (Licenceware)

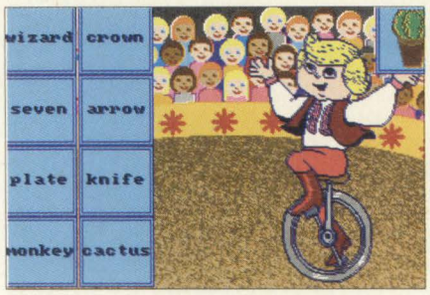
Amiga • 1Mb • Plus compatible • Disk LPD29 • £3.50 • Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

Kids always want to run away to join the circus. But if the circus is anything like the one in *Big Top Fun* they might have second thoughts; all the performers are so hopeless they need your help to get them through the acts. This could turn out to be harder work than you thought.

The program contains four very colourful games all based on a circus theme and containing some element of spelling. You choose the one you want from a menu screen which is accompanied by a splendidly echoey piece of circus music.

In *Balance* a unicyclist is in danger of toppling from his bike because he has an object in one hand but not in the other. You have to work out what the object is and decide which, from a selection of eight to the right of the screen, matches it. Click on it and it leaps to the unicyclist's free hand. Get it right and you score points. Get it wrong and the unicyclist wobbles a bit, and you get another go; it's a pity he doesn't fall over as that would have added to the fun. There are three difficulty levels; in the lowest you match pictures with pictures, but in the highest you have to match pictures to words.

Match Play is this month's version of *Match Pairs*, where you have to turn over two cards at a time and try to find matching pairs. Again there are three difficulty levels ranging from matching pictures with pictures, to matching pictures with words.



Stop the unicyclist from falling over by balancing the picture with the correct word in *Big Top Fun*

Seal-A-Grams is brilliant. A number of seals balance lettered balls on their noses. The letters spell a word, but unfortunately they are all mixed up. You have to click on pairs of seals to get them to swap balls until the word is spelt correctly. If you can't work out what the word is you can cheat; the Show Me option gives you a picture of the thing it is you have to spell. The only drawback is the horrible 'boing' sound fx when the seals catch the balls.

Balloon Burst on the other hand, has some great balloon-bursting sound fx. In this a number of lettered balloons bounce around the top of the big top. You control a clown with a pop-gun, and you have to burst the correct balloons to spell out an object selected by the computer.

All the games contain excellent graphics and simple but effective animation. What they do lack is any sense of competition. If you get an answer incorrect, there is no real penalty, you just keep on trying until you get 15 right. This means that you cannot judge your child's progress (unless you time how long they take to do the games, which is a bit of a hassle). But definitely worth splashing out £3.50 on.

AMIGA 85%

Is it a book? Is it a slideshow? No, it's a Total Concept, heading your way...

Total Concepts (PD)

Amiga • 512K • Vally PD, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 2YD ☎ 0702 466933

The problem with computer-based books is that they are rarely as convenient as real books or as easy to read as real books. You can't flip through pages to find the section you want and the text is usually so difficult to read it would give an optician nightmares.

Luckily, *Total Concepts* is a step in the right direction. Created using a program called *Gold Disk Browser* they are midway between interactive books and annotated slideshows. Author Writer C Hill plans a whole series of *Total Concept* releases covering such topics as military aircraft, genealogy and fresh water fishing as well as dinosaurs and astronomy. Each will come on three disks – one containing the control disk, the second with the pictures and main information and the third with the glossary and index – and will be licenceware.

For the moment, though, two one-disk tasters have been released as PD; *Dinosaurs* and *Astronomy*. And if these are anything to go by, the real series is going to be excellent. They feature an easy-to-use browse system operated by clicking on arrows to move through the pages, and if you go the contents page and click on a chosen topic you are taken straight there. The glossaries are even better, because if an entry is cross-referenced then you can click on a button to take you straight to the entry that it's cross-referenced with.

The green-on-black text is easy to read both in terms of literary quality and strain on the eye. The information is concise but instructive, though really you'll have to have some interest in the topics already to get any real worth out of these disks, as the details are sometimes a bit more than introductory. The pictures are all of a very high standard, especially on the astronomy disk.

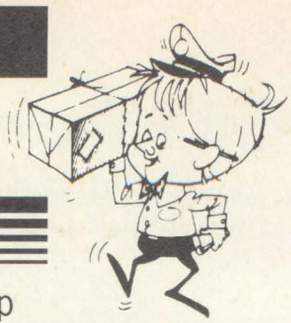
If you are interested in the soon-to-come licenceware releases, get these free PD sampler first to see whether you like the style. In themselves they are pretty good, but the three-disk versions, which we'll review as soon they become available, promise to be excellent.

AMIGA 75%

***Total Concepts – Astronomy* features some extremely nicely-digitised pictures of astral bodies, such as the Horse Head Nebula, here**

***Total Concepts – Dinosaurs* has fewer pictures but the text is just as lively and informative. An appetising taster for the forthcoming real thing**

BYTEBACK



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AG.22 **Return to Earth;** Elite style
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AG.30* **Twintris;** Better than Tetris!
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AG.52 **Block It;** Superb Puzzle game!
AG.54* **Downhill Skiing;** Classic game.
AG.55 **Amos-Defence;** Shoot-em-up.
AG.56 **Assassins Games II;** Invaders, Girl Action, Missile Command etc...
AG.57* **Battleforce;** Fantasy Action.
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AF.03 **Publishers;** Helvetica, Akashi, Andover, Bookman, Boxie, Times...
AF.04 **Various;** Unusual, Videofonts, Large & Small fonts....Utilities.

DEMOS

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AD.02 **Walker 2;** Classic animation (Mb)
AD.04 **Probe Sequence;** Award winner!
AD.18* **Puggs in Space;** Funny cartoon!
AD.21* **Busy Bee;** Sculpt 3D anim. (Mb)
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The Home & Educational section is full of classic PD. Much of it is too idiosyncratic to be sold at full-price but, nevertheless, essential to someone somewhere. If you want to know what we reckon is the best that we've reviewed in our first four issues, here they are...

PC

❶ Compu-Chef — Issue 3 — 92%

PDSL, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, Sussex ☎ 0892 663298

If you're seriously into cooking then you seriously need this program. Packed with recipes, *Compu-Chef* is easy to use and very well-presented.

❷ Wunderbook — Issue 2 — 88%

Softcell Services, 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT ☎ 0443 238630

The fun way for young kids to learn the foreign names for familiar everyday objects. Colourful and simple to use, it covers French, German and Spanish.

❸ Funny Face — Issue 2 — 87%

Softcell Services, 25 Maywood, Drunna Pontydun CF7 9PT ☎ 0443 238630

A bit like a police photofit, *Funny Face* is a great fun program for kids all about creating fizogs from a wide selection of facial features.

A portrait of the writer as an ill man, thanks to *Funny Face*

❹ Save The Planet — Issue 2 — 85%

Fantasia Shareware, PO Box 1231, Clutton, Bristol ☎ 0761 453716

A comprehensive one-off diskzine covering all things green. Lots of frightening figures and some practical advice on what you can do.

❺ Henrietta's Book of Spells — Issue 2 — 80%

Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

A cut-down PD version of the commercial Scetlander game for kids, this is still excellent. Six highly entertaining educational games.

❻ Funnels and Buckets — Issue 2 — 79%

Academy Software, PO Box 65, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 8YZ ☎ 0227 360808

This maths game may look a little primitive but it is very addictive, fast-paced and bound to sharpen up your mental arithmetic. A triumph of substance over style.

❼ Monkey Business — Issue 4 — 77%

Testware, 46 The Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorkshire ☎ 0423 886415

An interactive storybook which features a pair of terrible twins on a trip to the zoo. It may be in mono, but the text, written by an established children's author is great.

❽ Amy's First Primer — Issue 1 — 75%

Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

A compilation of six early-learning games covering maths, spelling and shape recognition. Simple but colourful and (surprisingly for the PC) some nifty sound fx.

❾ EGA Coloring Book — Issue 4 — 75%

The Thompson Partnership, Church Croft, Bramshall, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5DE ☎ 0889 564601

A shareware colouring book package that features an amazing 600 different colours and patterns from which to choose. A bit hefty at £20 but certainly impressive.

❿ Starview — Issue 4 — 74%

Eigen Software, PO Box 722, Swindon SN2 6YB

Find out what the night sky will look like on any date from any position on Earth.

ST

❶ About the House — Issue 3 — 90%

Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

Control a butterfly as it flies through a house causing magical things to happen. A genuinely charming game for very young kids.

❷ Dot To Dot — Issue 2 — 90%

Jennix PD, 66 Abbey Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 3QB

Join-the-dots successfully transferred to computer. The dots in this case can be lettered or numbered for extra educational value and the results can be coloured in.

❸ Moonletters — Issue 1 — 90%

Goodman's PDL, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW ☎ 0782 335650

A spelling program disguised as an alien shoot-'em-up. Excellent graphics and sound.

❹ KidStory — Issue 1 — 90%

Risetime, 19 Quarry Hill Road Tonbridge, Kent

Based on the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* this program enables kids to choose props that will appear in the tale, often with hilarious results.

❺ Colourspace — Issue 1 — 88%

Llamasoft, 49 Mount Pleasant, Tadley, Hants ☎ 0734 814478

This creates coloured patterns in response to you moving your mouse. It may sound dull, but turn the lights down, the music up and it's great fun.

❻ KidShapes — Issue 1 — 85%

Risetime, 19 Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent

An art program for young kids this comprises a grid and a number of various coloured shapes that you can plonk on to it. Simple but well-realised.

❼ Computer School — Issue 2 — 83%

Riverdene, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG3 5AN ☎ 0734 452416

This program makes good use of cartoon-style graphics to help expand your child's mind. Maths, spelling and picture recognition all covered.

❽ Dizzy Funtime — Issue 2 — 82%

Caledonia PDL, Caledonia PDL, 250 Oldtown Road, Hilton, Inverness IV2 4PT ☎ 0463 225736

Eight excellent and wide-ranging educational games all featuring a little blue ball character called Dizzy. The graphics and sound are extremely good.

❾ Lost Treasure — Issue 4 — 82%

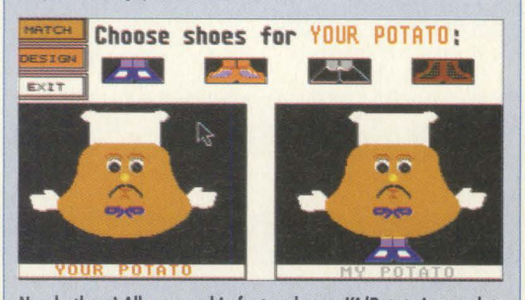
Rust PDL, 361 Ordnance Road. Enfield, Middlesex ☎ 0992 717828

Learn about reading map co-ordinates while searching for buried treasure. Great cartoon-style graphics and superb sound.

❿ KidPotato — Issue 1 — 80%

Risetime, 19 Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent

Dressing up potatoes is what this game is all about. Match your potato with the computer's or design your own. Excellent fun!



Nearly there! All you need is feet and your *KidPotato* is complete

Amiga

❶ Storyland 2 — Issue 3 — 89%

Amiganuts United,169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX

An anti-vivisectionist kids' adventure, but don't think it's going to be heavy going. In fact, it's brilliant fun, and constantly coming up with surprises to make you go, "aahh".

❷ Play It Safe — Issue 1 — 84%

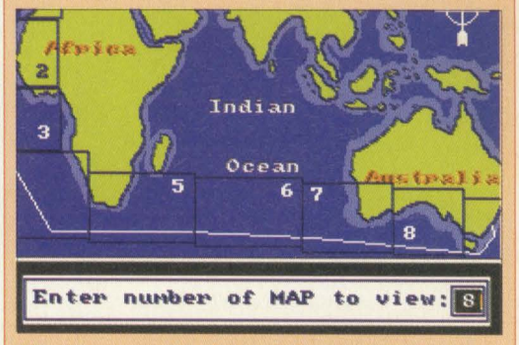
Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

There are hidden dangers lurking around the house, and this game teaches kids to be be on the look out. Great graphics, lots of variety, hours of fun.

❸ Coromandel Voyage — Issue 4 — 83%

GTS, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts ☎ 0707 664654

Based on authentic historical records this program charts the voyage of the ship Coromandel taking settlers from Portsmouth to Sydney. Colourful and informative.



Follow the voyage of the Coromandel in the early 19th century

❹ Dizzy Funtime — Issue 2 — 82%

ESP, 32a Southchurch Road, Southend, Essex SS1 2ND

Eight excellent educational games all featuring a little blue ball called Dizzy. The graphics and sound are extremely good.

❺ Lost Treasure — Issue 4 — 82%

Crazy Joe's, 145 Effingham Street, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 1BL ☎ 0709 829286

Map reading can be fun as this colourful treasure searching game proves.

❻ Words — Issue 4 — 80%

GTS, Cucumber Hall Farm, Cucumber Lane, Essendon, Herts ☎ 0707 664654

A handy, two-disk compilation of programs all with a lexigraphical theme. Everything from a crossword creator to a word finding utility.

❼ Word Factory — Issue 1 — 78%

Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

A spelling game for very young children that is set in a factory. A wide selection of words, brilliant graphics and simple to understand gameplay.

❽ Work And Play — Issue 1 — 75%

Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

Three-game compilation featuring a time-telling tutorial, an impressive-looking board game based on times tables and an addition game set in a shop.

❾ Magical Young Artist — Issue 2 — 75%

Déjà Vu, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA ☎ 0942 495261

A colouring book program featuring over 30 different pictures to colour in and the prettiest colour selection menu bar ever devised.

❿ Starchart — Issue 4 — 73%

Riverdene, 30a School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire ☎ 0734 452416

Watch the skies! And make it more interesting by using this very comprehensive program. Feed in the date and place and it generates the night sky-scape to suit.

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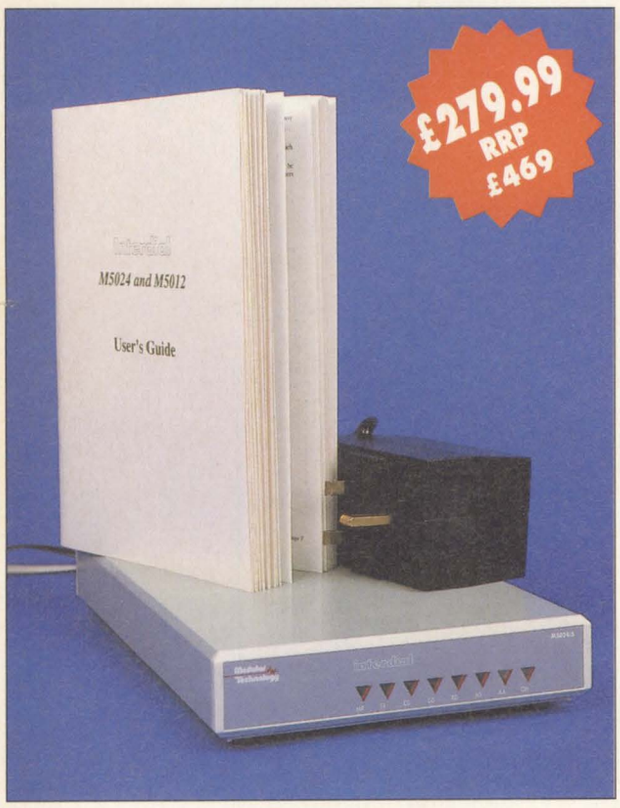

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Save nearly £200 on this top-quality modem! This British-built device carries full British Telecom approval and has more features than you could shake an RS232 cable at. Just look at these specifications:

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- Eight-LED status display

All these features make for a trouble-free, easy-to-use modem – you'll have it up and running in no time! A full-featured modem at a price that's hard to beat.

Hyundai HMD2401

Price £99.99 inc P&P
Order No PD08

At our special price of under £100 – a saving of £30 – it's not easy to top the Hyundai HMD2401 in the value-for-money stakes. This is a heck of a lot of modem for very little loot! Though it doesn't boast BT approval, it has excellent features that you'd only expect only from more wallet-wounding machines:

- V21, V22 and V22bis protocols
- 300, 600, 1200 and 2400 connection speeds
- Additional phone socket
- Eight-LED status panel

This really does offer excellent value-for-money and is the ideal way for the cost-conscious computer user to enter the exciting world of comms! It's simple to use, too – just plug in and go!

Connecting up

Before connecting up you'll need to get hold of an RS232 cable (around £10) to link the computer to the modem. Your local computer dealer will be happy to help.

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Next Month

The end of the issue! It can't be! Well, fear not, we're already working hard to produce issue six of *Public Domain*, and have some pretty exciting plans.

Following up on the MIDI and Demo creation features, we'll be exploring the world of music. We look at the programs that get the best out of your computer's built-in sound chip.

We'll be taking another look at the world of comms. Though PD itself is cheap, using your phone can be alarmingly expensive. We give out top tips on cutting the cost of your bill.

Thinking of starting up in business but you're on a limited budget? We recommend the best shareware programs to keep overheads way down.

We'll be continuing our Public Eye series with an interview with another prolific PD personality. Who exactly? You're going to have wait 'til next month to find out!

***Public Domain* issue 6 is on sale 2nd April. You'd be mad to miss it!**

Contributors: Jerry Glenwright, Maff Evans, Nial Grimes, James Leach, Jason Saunders
Photography: Ashton James ● Illustration: Jolyon Webb, Ian Ellery

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THE COMPUTER GAMES OLYMPIAD 1992

What Is It ? ...For the *first* time in this country a *National Computer Games Competition* encompassing all your favourite games and the chance to win the coveted U.K. PC Computer Games Champion Award.

What Else Can You Win? Prizes will be awarded for style, gameplay and high scores as well as for positioning within each catagory. Prizes will be given both at regional and final levels and will include International Holidays, Cash prizes, Computers and Computer Games. Each entrant will also be given a certificate of attendance stating their position gained and the overall rating given by the adjudicators.

Where Is It ? As much as possible we have tried to keep travel down to a minimum. On the right is a list of 40 Towns which will all have regional heats. Any other towns or areas that have a large registration count will also be included in the regional heats. The finals will be held in London.

When Is It ? Regional Heats and Finals will be held between May and August in the evenings and on weekends. The Finals Will be held in September. Final venue dates will be furnished on May 4th, 3 days after the final registration date.

How Do You Enter ? *Easy,* just fill in your registration card below and send it with your registration fee to the Olympiad Committee at the address below before the final registration date May 1st. On receipt of your application all your details will be placed into our competetion database and your entrance number and ticket will be despatched to you as well as a complimentary spectator ticket for a friend. On May 4th you will be sent confirmation of the date of your local regional heat and the venue.

Which Catagory Will You Be In ? Catagories will be by age, gender and game type.

How Will The Competition Work ? Prior to the competition starting at each venue, time will be allotted to each entrant to practice. For maximum enjoyment each round will include competing both against other competitors as well as the computer. Adjudicators will be giving points for combat style and sportsmanship. Each region will produce 20-25 winners to go on to the finals. Finals will include wall screen views for maximum effect and will produce the UK PC Computer Games Champion.

Are There Any Limitations To Entrance? Yes. There will be a maximum of 10,000 competitors. The minimum age for entrants is 13.

Where can I Get More Information ? Call either of the registration Hot Lines for more details.

CAN YOU HACK IT!?
HAVE YOU GOT IT?
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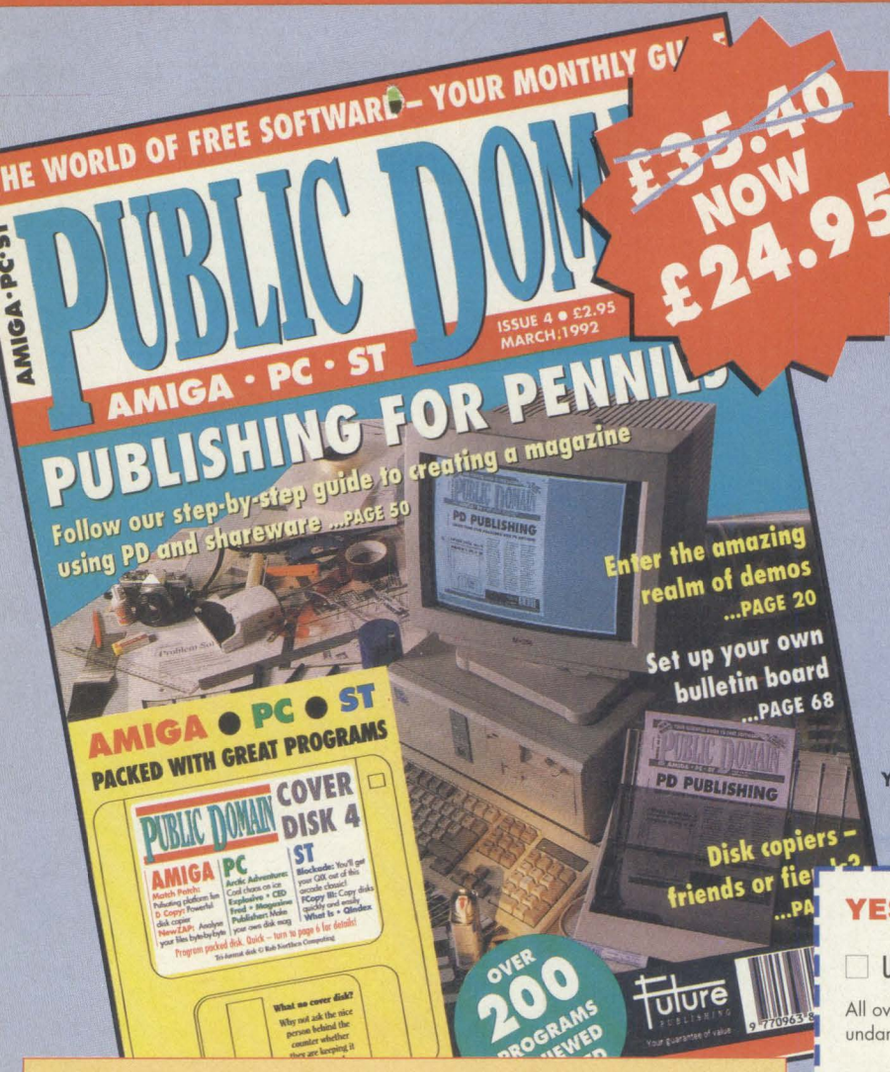
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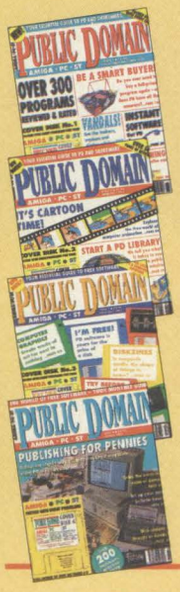

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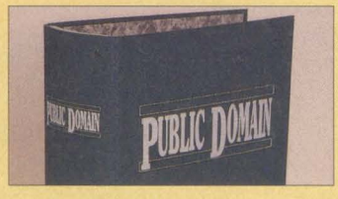

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- **Back & Forth** – Task manager.
- **Brothers Keeper 4.5** (3d) – Fine, full featured genealogy prog.
- **Dancad 3D 2.5G** (5d) – Wire-Frame drawing tool (HD).
- **Express Check** (2d) – To manage your cheque account.
- **Extra Dos Toolbox** (3d) – Essential for Dos users.
- **Formgen/Formfill** (2d) – A very versatile form generator & form filler.
- **Home Inventory 4.0** – Keeps track of everything you own.
- **Meal Master 6.14** (2d) – Complete recipe filer. Comes with over 450 recipes to start you off.
- **Mr Label 5.2** – Powerful & versatile label maker.
- **Ledgermaster** (4d) – Modular/Integrated accounts/invoicing.
- **Names & Dates 4.01** – (2d) Superb personal information manager!
- **PC-File 5.1** (3d) – General database program. (HD).
- **PC-Key Draw 3.76** (4d) – Powerful drawing & design (HD).
- **PC-Type 4** (4d) Word processor, Spell check, Mail Merge.
- **PKZip/PKUnzip** – Tools to create/extract archives.
- **Piano Man** (2d) – Create and play music.
- **VgaPaint** – Full colour paint package (VGA).
- **Vaccine and Virus killers Ver 8.0** (2d) – Collection of utilities designed to protect your system from viruses! This disk will find (and destroy) over 200 different viruses & 500+ virus strains.

CLIPART (PCX)

Note: These disks contain clip art in PCX (PC-Paint brush) format. They can be used with Wordperfect 5.0/5.1, Pagemaker, Ventura Publisher, Windows or programs that read PCX files.

- **Accent Dingbats.**
- **Alphabet Soup** (2d).
- **Babies** (2d).
- **Birds** (2d).
- **Business** (2d).
- **Butterflies.**
- **Church** (4d).
- **Education** (2d).
- **Family** (2d).
- **Food** (2d).
- **Headlines** (2d).
- **Health/Medical/Dental** (2d).
- **Holidays** (3d).
- **Houses** (3d).
- **Kids/Cartoons** (2d).
- **Ladies** (2d).
- **Men** (2d).
- **Misc** (4d).
- **Months.**
- **Sport** (4d).
- **Teddy Bears** (2d).
- **Wedding** (3d).

EDUCATION

- **Amy's First Primer** – Six learning program ages 4-8 (CGA).
- **The DOS Learning System** – Learn to use DOS with this great program. Covers all versions of DOS 2.0-4.01.
- **Funnells & Buckets** – Teach children basic maths skills!
- **Lotus 2.2 Learning System** (5d) learn Lotus easily and quickly.
- **Typing Teacher** – Five progs. to improve speed and accuracy!
- **World 2.99** – Globe. Learn about cities & countries (CGA).
- **Tutor DOS** (4 disks) – The supreme DOS tutorial. Everything you wanted to know about DOS and more! (HD).
- **Language Tutors** □ **German** □ **French** □ **Spanish** □ **Italian** □ **Cantonese** □ **Japanese** □ **Hebrew**
- **Pre-School Education** (2D) – A collection of simple tests and games with good reward, and lots of colours and sounds CGA).
- **Translators/Dictionaries:** □ **German.** □ **Italian.** □ **Spanish.**

GAMES

- **Adventure Game Toolkit** (3d) – To create adventure games.
- **Arcade Games** I-Pac man, Hopper, Space Invaders, Fusion, etc (CGA).
- **Arcade Games** 2-Double Blocks (another Tetris variation), Q-Bert, Breakout, Beast and others (CGA).
- **CGA Tetris Collection** (2d) Ten Great Versions of this game.
- **Chess Challenges** (2d) 4 Good games + super Tutorial (CGA).
- **Kid's Games** – Fun for the under 12 set.
- **Strategy Games** – Risk, Othello, Chess, Nyet and others (CGA).
- **Super Solitaire** (2d) – 15 great variations (CGA).

EGA/VGA GAMES

Note: These games require EGA or VGA graphics.

- **Commander Keen** – Sensational game. Superb sound, graphics and more!
- **Captain Comic 4.0** – Fabulous sound, graphics and moere!
- **Dark Ages** – From the creators of Commander Keen.
- **Duke Nukem** – Top quality arcade game 640 (HD).
- **Hugo II, Whodunnit!** – An Animated 3D adventure.
- **Last Half Of Darkness** – Graaphics Adventure game.

WINDOWS 3.0 GAMES

- **Games for Windows 1** – Klotis, Worm War, Atmoids, Lunar Landers, Checkers.
- **Games for Windows 2** –Space Walls, Hextris, Mines, Tic-Tac-Toe, etc!
- **Games for Windows 3** – Tetris, Concentration, Arachnoid, Alien Forces etc.
- **Chess for Windows** – Play the tremendous game of chess.
- **Tapie! 5.0** – Mahjong for windows
- **WinWheel 1.2** – (Wheel of Fortune) type game.

WORDPERFECT 5.0/5.1

- **Art & Graphics Vol 1** (2d). Over 90 graphics.
- **Art & Graphics Vol 2** (2d). Another 90 graphics.
- **Art & Graphics Vol 3** (2d). 90 further graphics.
- **Art & Graphics Vol 4** (2d). 90 more graphics.
- **Art & Graphics Vol 5** (2d). 90 more different graphics.
- **WordPerfect 5.1 Learning System** (3d) – Learn to use WP easily and quickly with this great tutorial (WordPerfect NOT required).
- **Super WP 2.2** (4d) – can emulate WordPerfect and others.
- **WordPerfect 5.1 Macros** (2d) – Over 100 worthwhile macros.
- **WordPerfect 5.0/5.1 Tools** (2d) – 17+ Fantastic utilities
- **PC-Draft II/III** (2d) Art/Graphics for W/P 5.0/5.1 (CGA)(HD).
- **By Design** – Desktop publisher and Graphic Design for WP.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

- **Banner & Sign makers** – Banners or signs for any occasion.
- **Show Printer – Light 3.7** – to make any presentation look its best.
- **Text 3.0 (20d) Computer Programming Language** requires books £28.45
- **Typesetter PC 1.8** (2d) – True WYSIWYG shareware DTP program.
- **Optiks 2.20** – Paste-up prog reads all kinds of Graphics files.
- **PrintPartner** (2d) Print Master & PrintShop clone.

ATM FONTS WINDOWS 3.0

Note: these disks require Windows 3.0.

- **ATM Fonts for Windows Vol.1** (4d) – 30+ Fonts for Adobe Type Manager. Will work with all Windows applications.
- **ATM Fonts for Windows Vol.2** (4d) – 30+ Additional Fonts.
- **ATM Fonts for Windows Vol.3** (4d) – 30+ Additional Fonts.
- **ATM Fonts for Windows Vol.4** (4d) – 30+ Additional Fonts.

WINDOWS 3.0

- **Active Life 1.5** – Tremendous "Personal Information Manager".
- **Address manager 1.0c** – For home and business use.
- **Almanac** – The ultimate calendar for Windows!
- **Aporia** – Icon-oriented user interface.
- **Atlus** – An atlas of the United States.
- **Backdesk** – Pop-up menu and virtual desktop.
- **Barry Press Utilities:** Calpop, Runner, Match, Flipper, Portrait, Landscap, Time, Meltdown and VHold.
- **Bible Windows** – Display Bible verses.
- **Classic Time Pieces** – High Colour display a few different clocks.
- **Clip Book 3.0** (3d) – Includes ToolBook Run Time ver 1.5
- **Command Post 7.0S** – Great File Manager/Menus sys.
- **Cursor Utilities** – Alter the hour glass to any shape.
- **Decor** – Graphics resource browser and editor.
- **Elana** – Easy change of System. INI, Win.INI, etc.
- **Financier Plus 2.1** – Calculate amort. sched. & more.
- **Fractals & Mandelbrots** (2d) – Fascinating/Startling Graphics!
- **GrabPlus 6.0** (2d) The Pop Up Address and Envelope printer!
- **Hyperdisk 4.12** – Make Windows run 2 to 10 times faster.
- **Icon Utilities** (3d) – Full set to create, view & manage Icons.
- **KFree 4.0B** – Display Free Memory.
- **Metz Utilities** (2d) – Full set of useful utilities.
- **Money Smith 1.2c** – Double-entry accounting system.
- **Organize! 1.5** – Personal Information Manager.
- **Painless Accounting 1.0** – Full featured system.
- **Paint Shop** – Display, convert, alter & print pictures.
- **Personal Invoicer 1.22** – Runs under EXCEL.
- **PC-Project 3.0** – A very nice project manager for Windows.
- **Pixfolio** (2d) – To view and catalogue graphic utilities.
- **Postscript Screen Fonts** (3d) Groups of Avant Garde, Bookman, Courier, Garamond, Helvetica, Korinna, Palatino, New Century Schoolbook, Symbol, Times, Zapf Chancery & Zapdingbat.
- **Quotes for Windows** – 3 Great programs give you daily quotes.
- **Screen Savers for Windows** – 12 Various Windows screen savers!
- **Stable-Technical Graphs 1.0 (2d)** – Powerful stock market technical analysis program.
- **The Great Icon Collection** (4d) – 3000 of the best icons!
- **Toolbook Programs Vol 1** (2d) – Applications/utilities
- **Toolbook Programs Vol 2** (2d) – More as above.
- **Toolbook Games** – A phenomenal collection of games.
- **Toolbook Tutor** (2d) Learn to use the Windows Toolbook.
- **Unicom 3.0** – Great communications program.
- **Utilities for Windows** (4d) – 50+ utilities that will help you get the most out of Windows, as well as making Windows easier to use!
- **Vbrun** – Visual basic run time.
- **Wallpaper:** Volumes 1 to 5 (4 of each Vol) 75 background per vol available seperately.
- **Wallpaper Glamour Collection** (4 disks).
- **WinBatch** – Windows batch language.
- **WinCheck 3.0H** (2d) – Chequebook program.
- **Winedit 1.2J** – Programmer's editor.
- **WinQVT** – Terminal emulator & communications.
- **WOPR** (2d) – Collection of Word for Windows Macros.
- **Xantippe** – Hypertext/graphics authoring system.
- **XVT Draw** – Great drawing program.

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PKZip	**£38.78**
Galaxy Light	**£38.78**
As-Easy-As	**£57.58**
4Dos	**£38.78**
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PC file 5.1	**£121.03**
PC Type 4	**£74.03**
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Power Menu	**£74.03**
Icon Timer Pro	**£84.54**
Winzipman	**£25.79**

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Tel: 0704 539677 Fax: 0704 539678

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NEW RELEASES

Here are a few of the new titles we have received recently. We have hundreds more, so if you don't see something listed, 'phone us to see if we have it.

EASY STOCK MANAGER (1) UK stock control.
4DOS 4 (2) Latest version of the alternative to DOS.
POWERMENU 6 (2) Latest version supports PKZIP & SCAN
INVOICE MASTER (1) UK invoicing system.
UK CASH ACCOUNTS (1) Home accounts.
SENIOR PHYSICS FACTS (1) UK program.
ASTRAL WINDOWS (1) Astology program from UK author.
VIRUS CENTRAL (1) Menu driven system for McAfee's tool.
THE ELECTRONIC ALMANAC (1) Astrology collection
WINDOWS GAMES #4 (1) 7 solo games.
ATM FONTS (16) Fonts for Windows.
COMMANDER KEEN II (2) (EGA) "Goodbye Galaxy."
COMMANDER KEEN 6 (EGA) "Aliens Ate My Baby Sitter."
ARCTIC ADVENTURE (1) Search for Viking treasure.
JUMPMAN LIVES (1) (EGA) Up to four player arcade game.
WINSPELL (1) Spell checker for Windows.
ASTRO-HEALTH (1) Vitamins/Minerals for Astological signs
HORARY HELPER (1) Horary astrol. for day, time & place.
SHOWPARTNER LITE (2) Creates superb presentations.
PAGE CHEQUEBOOK (1) Home Finance from Page author
DISKTREE (1) (HD) Friendly front end for DOS.

WORD PROCESSING

PC TYPE 4 (4 discs)(HD) Latest version from Buttonware.
GALAXY LITE (1) Wordstar compatible/drop down menus.
THESAUR PLUS (1) (HD) Good pop-up, use with your w/p.
STYLE CHECKERS (1) Checks the readability of text.
SIGNSMITH (1) Create letterheads/posters/logos/pics.
LQ (1) Dot Matrix print enhancer, fonts, print-spooler etc.

DATABASE MANAGEMENT

PC FILE 5 (3 discs) (HD) Powerful D/Base III compatible.
FILE EXPRESS v5(4) Powerful, but easy to use.
FREEFILE (1) Easy to learn menu-driven database.
ZEPHYR (2) (HD) Easy to use fully relational D/Base.
WAMPUM (1) Fast, fully relational. Great Value!
CLUB (1) UK club membership program.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

ALT (1) (HD) Editor/ calculator/ address book/ calandar etc.
FRIDAY (1) (HD) Super pop-up Organiser/ diary/ notebook.
ACTIVE LIFE FOR DOS (2) Calendar, appointments, dialler.

PAINTING/DRAWING

FRACTAL GRAFICS (1 disc) PCX drawing using Fractals.
VGA PAINT (1) Excellent VGA graphics/drawing program.
DESKTOP PAINT (1) (HD) (EGA or Hercules) Superb B/W.

DESIGN

CHARTS UNLIMITED (1 disc)Flowcharts/electrical/Gantt etc
EASYDRAW (1) Technical drawing, flowcharts, diagrams.
DRAFT CHOICE (1) Accurate, easy to use CAD program.
PC-DRAFT II (1) Full A4 150 dots per inch drawings.

GRAPHICS UTILITIES

GRAPHIC WORKSHOP (2 discs) (HD) Converts/scales/ views/dithers and prints many picture formats.
ICONVERT (1) Converts many formats + screen preview.

SPREADSHEETS

AS-EASY-AS (1 disc) Famous 123-style spreadsheet.
TUTOR 1-2-3 (1) Interactive tutorial for 123 beginners.

CLIP ART

OFFICE IMAGES (1 disc) Light hearted, choose PCX or MAC.
COOPER SET (2) 1500 pictures. Choose: PCX/IMG/MAC.
DECORATIVE DROPCAP (1) Decorative capitals in PCX /IMG

BUSINESS

MARKETEER (2 discs)(HD) Complete sales system.
MANAGEMENT TRAINING (1) Thorough training program.
BUSINESS LETTERS (3) 600+ letters in ASCII format.

FINANCE

FREEWAY CASHBOOK (3 discs) Profit & loss/VAT/bank rec.
PAGE FINANCE CONTROL (2)(HD) Leading finance package
FREEWAY LEDGERMASTER (4) Major integrated system.
HOME FINANCE MANAGER (1) Keeps your home accounts.

DOS UTILITIES

MCAFFEE VIRUS TOOLS (2 discs) Anti-virus programs.
POWERMENU (1) (HD) Friendly menus, easier than DOS.
AUTOMENU (1) (HD) Run programs with single keystrokes.
PC DOS HELP (1) Highly rated DOS tutor/detailed refs.
PKZIP/PKUNZIP (1) Fast and efficient archiving program.
PKZMENU & PKLITE (1) Two utilities for PKZIP.
HYPERDISK (1) (HD) Disc caching to speed up your system.

PROGRAMMING

C TUTOR (2 discs) Excellent tutorial with examples.
PERSONAL C COMPILER (1) Best shareware compiler?
A86/D86 (1) Fast Assembler/debugger.
8086 TUTOR (1) Intro to Assembly language programming.
TURBO PASCAL TUTOR (2) Very good tutorial.

HOBBIES & INTERESTS

FAMILY TREE (1 disc) Prints charts or book with index.
BROTHER'S KEEPER (4) Friendly. Prints sideways charts.
SOLVER (1) Crossword, anagram & word square solver.
FOOTBALL FORECAST (1) Popular pools/fixed odds system.
PUNTER'S PAL (1) UK Horse racing analysis program.

GAMES

SOCCER GAME (1 disc) Get your team to the First Division.
GOAL (1) International soccer management.
PC PRO GOLF (2) Golf simulation. Quite good CGA graphics.
GRAND PRIX (1) Manage a Formula One team.
FORD SIMULATOR II (2) Test drive a Ford car!
INSANITY (1) Fantastic maze game. Needs colour.
DRACULA IN LONDON (1) Good graphic adventure game.
GET LUCKY (1) Collection of harmless (18+ only) games.
SLEUTH/HANGMAN (1) Find the murderer!
BACKGAMMON (1) Plus Cribbage & Draughts. Very good!
POWERCHESS (1) Super chess game. Works on all graphics
CASTLE MASTER (1) (CGA) Rescue your twin.
PHAROAH'S TOMB (1) (CGA) Raiders of the Lost Tomb.

EGA/VGA GAMES

VGA SHOOTING GALLERY (1 disc) 7 shooting competitions.
EGA ARCADE (1) 6 games including Mazewar & Shuttle.
EGA MAHJONGG (1) Super graphics, can design your tiles.
CUNNING FOOTBALL (1) American football sulation.
DARK AGES (1)(286) Supports AdLib/Sound Blaster cards.
GLOBAL WARFARE (1) UK written, RISK-type game.
COMMANDER KEEN (1) One of the best ever PC games!

EARLY LEARNING

HOORAY FOR HENRIETTA (1 disc) Maths for 5-12 year olds.
HENRIETTA'S BOOK OF SPELLS (1) Spelling for age 7-14.
AMY'S FIRST PRIMER (1) Pre-school educational games.
PC LEARNING GAMES (4)(EGA) Maths, Words etc (2-8yrs)
ANDY'S WORD GAMES (1) Improve spelling & grammar.
FUNNELS & BUCKETS (1) Games for age 2 to 10.
MONKEY BUSINESS (1)(mouse) Interactive story (age 7-10)

EDUCATION

PC TUTOR (1 disc) Good interactive computer tutorial.
TYPING TUTORS (1) Good tutors- PC TOUCH & FASTYPE.
GCSE (1) Choose Maths, Science, Physics, Comp. Studies.
WORLD MAP 2.9 (1) Draws global maps - fascinating!
FRENCH TUTORS 1 & 2 (2) Multiple choice tests.

LIFESTYLE

HOROSCOPE/ASTROLOGY (1)Prints star Chart & analysis
HANDWRITING ANALYST (1) Thorough graphology program

MS WINDOWS PROGRAMS

WINDOWS GAMES (1 disc) 12 games, Poker, Yacht etc.
SCREEN PEACE (1) Set of screen saver programs.
ICON TOOLS (2) Let you edit, draw, view Icons.
ZIP MANAGER (1) File compression manager.
ORGANISE (1) Personal information manager .
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